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new Masses

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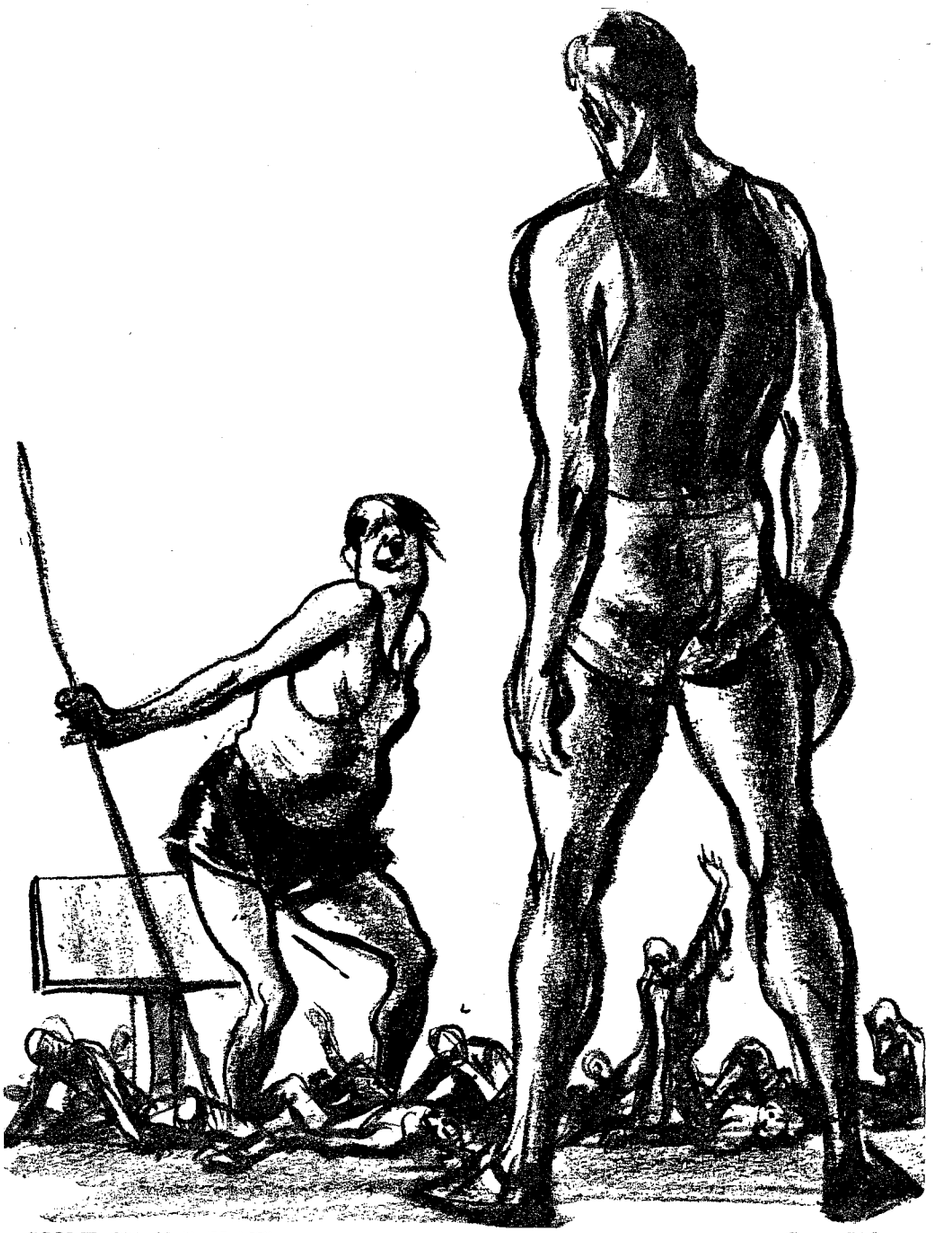
OCTOBER 22, 1935



"COME ON AND PLAY" — *George Dickson*

Japan Plots War

THE most recent violations of Soviet borders by Japanese detachments reveal Japan as already beginning to use Europe's crisis for its own ends. Border incidents are not unusual in the Far East. Japan has frequently stepped across the boundary line between Manchukuo and the Soviet Union, fired on Soviet patrols and when the U.S.S.R. has protested such aggression, replied with a denial or issued a counter-charge. This policy of harassing Soviet Russia is practiced in the hope that retaliation will give the cue to the other imperialist nations to shift the guilt of war from Japan to the Soviet Union. The peace policy of the U.S.S.R. has up to now avoided the war toward which Japanese militarists have been pressing for the last decade. In this issue, Hansu Chan, editor of China Today, analyzes the strategy of Japanese imperialism in the light of the new drive toward war in Europe. That the invasion of the Soviet Union by Japan is by no means a remote possibility is borne out by an examination of the Japanese national budget for 1936-37. Militarists demand that half the budget be spent on the army and navy. Despite intensive efforts by Finance Minister Takahashi to reduce the national debt, which increased 50 percent last year, the army and navy cry for budgets which are not only larger than last year but "equal to the total ordinary revenue estimated for the current fiscal year."

MOREOVER, Japan's recent trade "boom" has fallen off severely and exports compared to imports show an increasingly unfavorable balance. Like Italy, Japan is faced with the immediate necessity of diverting internal discontent by plunging into a foreign adventure. "Expansion" in China and invasion of the Soviet Union, are the twin solutions offered by the militarists. Japan's raid into Manchuria, though it meant huge profits for the small group of finance capitalists, did not benefit the mass of Japanese workers and peasants. The new offensive in preparation is directed against the Soviet Union—"to improve the living conditons of the Japanese people." It will be the signal for the world imperialist attack against the U.S.S.R. led by Japan and Germany and in all likelihood, supported by England and other nations. Against this drive toward war stands the iron will of the Soviet Union to avoid hostilities so long as that course is possible, but if forced into war to be sufficiently prepared to smash the imperialist machine of Japan once and for all. Moreover, the working class and liberal groups of the world —led by the United Front in France— refuses to tolerate the attempt to smash socialism which has become finally victorious in the Soviet Union.

Insufficient Sanctions

WHILE the Italian armies press into Ethiopia, the League of Nations takes its first action in applying sanctions. So far, the League has acted tentatively—financial and economic sanctions have been planned but on the whole they are insufficient to stop Italian aggression. The adoption of President Roosevelt's definition of war materials leaves a great deal to be desired: Italy can still import cotton, metals, raw materials so long as these imports can be financed. The ban on shipments of arms to Ethiopia has been lifted, but at this late date, with access to Ethiopia almost completely cut off, the imperialist powers have succeeded in making this little more than a gesture. How far the League is willing to go in applying further sanctions remains to be seen—dependent for a large part on what action is taken by countries outside the League. Germany has given every indication that it would like to benefit by the chance to sell goods to Italy. The action of Hun-

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gary and Austria in refusing so far to exercise sanctions leaves the route between Germany and Italy open for such trade. To offset this and to make sanctions realistic, the Soviet Union (the only country in the League of Nations sincerely supporting a realistic peace policy) advocates the application of sanctions against countries in the League who refuse to cooperate with the majority of nations. The danger remains, as we have continually stressed, that the imperialist powers will use none too effective sanctions as a screen behind which negotiations will go on to allow Italian imperialism a free hand in Ethiopia and finally bring about a partition of the African state with Italy getting the lion's share. And while negotiations continue in Geneva, war is proving no boon to the Italian masses. With a standard of living already lower than that of any other European country, Mussolini has decreed that because of sanctions the masses must be willing to tighten their belts and make further "sacrifices" so that the fascist armies can be supported. How belts can be tightened when semi-starvation has already become the rule for vast sections of Italy, Mussolini has yet to make clear.

Mussolini's Publicity Man

MUSSOLINI has a good press agent. When a chieftain by the name of Haile Selassie Gugsa deserted [illegible] talian army, the press carried re- [illegible] a wholesale desertion of Ethio- [illegible] rces. What happened was that [illegible] eftain, as Harry Gannes points The Daily Worker, decided it [illegible] better part of valor to play [illegible] er he was captured in battle by [illegible] ting" Mussolini with his few [illegible] followers than to risk having his head paraded round on the end of a pike. The impression that Italian fascism wishes to give is that Ethiopian opposition has crumbled. But actually, Italian troops have as yet met with little opposition. The strategy of the Ethiopian defenders seems to be to allow the fascist armies to enter the country until their line of communication becomes difficult to maintain and their army, tiring after the first flush of enthusiasm, begins to feel the ravages of disease, oppressive heat and insufficient rations.

The Union League Tories

THE constitution has found another defender, this time in the Union League, which has just issued a sweeping statement attacking New Deal legislation as an effort to "undermine and overthrow the Constitution of the United States." Founded during Civil War days to "discountenance and rebuke by moral and social influence . . . every attempt against the integrity of the nation," the League rallied northern industrialists against secession and is now bent on trading on its reputation as a friend of constitutional government. Its arguments are ingenious appeals to legal precedent and popular sentiment to bolster up a contention that the balance of power between judicial, legislative and administrative branches of government is the best guarantee for the preservation of liberties. The League has nothing but praise for the Supreme Court but its real solicitude for the maintenance of the court's power to declare legislation unconstitutional is to be gathered from its pointed reference to the fact that justices are appointed for life while members of Congress "are elected for comparatively short terms and . . . on many occasions have bowed to what they considered the expression of the will of the majority." It is this fear of majority rule that really bothers Union League Tories; they are not blind to upsurge of sentiment for a Labor Party and they are laying the grounds to checkmate popular legislation.

WHILE the Union League, and its followers, are rallying for the ultimate struggle with labor it must not be supposed that the first with President Roosevelt is only a sham battle. The recurring attacks on the administration prove that a genuine split has developed in the ranks of the capitalists; the sniping that began with the formation of the Liberty League last fall has developed into open warfare. When President Roosevelt took office in 1933 the industrialists were thoroughly frightened; they saw their whole system collapsing over their heads and they fled like children to the administration, almost begging to be saved and willing to make concessions to the masses: "When the Devil was sick the Devil a monk would be." The flood of reform legislation eased the tension. Now profits are rising again and the threat of war in Europe promises even greater profits in the near future; the once chastened capitalists want no more restraints of even the mildest kind. The Devil is at least convalescent. President Roosevelt and his advisers still cling to the idea that capitalism cannot be preserved unless certain reforms are made permanent and perhaps extended a little. The issue is joined and it is apparent to Union League supporters that they still lack popular support. Hence their statement that a "legislative majority in a constitutional government can more easily be cruel, ruthless and disregardful of the rights of individuals than even a dictator." Because of the disrepute into which dictatorship has fallen the Union Leaguers dare not issue an open endorsement of fascism. They hope to accomplish the same end by posing as a friend and protector of civil liberties. They plan to seize power behind this smoke screen.

To the Chain Gang!

THE United States Supreme Court Monday washed its hands of the Angelo Herndon case when it refused to grant his application for a rehearing. Six justices took refuge behind legal technicalities and joined in a decision that means that Herndon must spend twenty years on a Georgia chain gang for the crime of organizing unemployed Negro and white workers. The only remaining hope is that Governor Talmadge may be moved to grant a pardon, a hope dependent on the actions of those who are opposed to the gross inhumanity of the sentence. The International Labor Defense, assisted by a large number of other organizations, has been campaigning for two million signatures to a petition asking for Herndon's freedom and the repeal of the old slave law under which he was convicted. Quick action is necessary at this time because Herndon must surrender to begin his sentence on October 24. Many of those who have been securing signatures to the petition have been slow about returning them under the belief that there was plenty of time. Not another moment can be lost. Governor Talmadge has national political ambitions and he might be moved to act if presented with overwhelming evidence of the unpopularity of the sentence. He admitted to the delegation of the National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners that the sentence smacked of "political persecution" and said that he wasn't "very strong" for it. United action may move him and save Angelo Herndon's life.

Students Against War

EIGHT student organizations have united to call for anti-war demonstrations on Armistice Day. Participating groups include the National Student Councils of the Y. M. C. A. and

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Y. W. C. A., the National Student Federation of America, the National Student League, the Students League for Industrial Democracy, the American Youth Congress, the committee on militarism in education and student divisions of the American League Against War and Fascism. The call urges students and faculty members to translate their peace sentiments into action by backing the following four-point program:

> Support of genuine neutrality legislation by the United States.
>
> Opposition to militarism in schools and colleges through support of the Nye-Kvale bill making R. O. T. C. optional.
>
> Insistence on opportunities in the curriculum and on the campus for relating education to these crucial problems.
>
> Refusal to support the government of the United States in any war that it may undertake.

Armistice Day is a legal holiday in the majority of the states and demonstrations will not take on the character of strikes in most instances. The real significance of the action lies in the fact that the imminence of war has caused so many widely differing groups to act together, some for the first time, in the cause of peace.

A Labor Party Victory

THE growth of Labor Party sentiment was strikingly illustrated in Detroit last week when Maurice Sugar, labor attorney, won a place in a primary election to choose candidates for the Common Council. He placed tenth on a list of eighteen candidates and his chances of election are excellent. Two other Labor Party candidates, not so well known, also made creditable showings while the Socialist nominee placed last. The Socialist candidate had the official backing of the Detroit Federation of Labor while Frank X. Martel, president of the Central Labor Council, opposed Sugar on the ground that the attorney was a Communist. Thirty A. F. of L. locals refused to follow the lead of officials and endorsed Sugar's candidacy and others are expected to fall in line. Sugar's greatest support came from precincts in the Negro district where he is known as an opponent of discrimination, from Polish communities which were most active in the recent meat strike and from Jewish districts where the lawyer gained favor through his anti-fascist stand. The victory came in the face of bitter opposition of daily newspapers and professional politicians and reflects both the confidence that Sugar has inspired in Detroit workers and the vital character of the platform on which he campaigned.

Gains in San Francisco

IN SAN FRANCISCO, Redfern Mason continues to gain support for his mayoralty campaign on the United Labor ticket. He has the enthusiastic backing of the majority of rank-and-file organized labor, particularly of the maritime unions. The Red scare has naturally been raised in all its virulence against the Labor Party, though running with Mason (who was once an active member of the Socialist Party) are persons of many shades of political opinion: the candidate for sheriff is a member of the San Francisco Council of the Democratic Party; for supervisors, three represent A. F. of L. unions, one, the organized unemployed, one, the Utopian Society and one, the Communist Party. This broad united front is opposed by a variety of old-guard politicians, among them the incumbent Mayor Rossi who ordered troops on to the docks to shoot down workers during the West Coast maritime strike of last year and who, paradoxically, is given the official support of the reactionary leaders of the Central Labor Council. And there are the candidates put up by "Better Business," masquerading under the title of the "Order of Cincinnatus." Of one of these would-be office holders, Hearst could find only this to say: "President of the district council of painters and one of the most active enemies of Communists in the labor movement." The list is rounded off with such men as Adolph Uhl, who has well-established Nazi connections and a former postmaster whose platform is based on the slogans "Keep Out the Reds" and "Keep Shipping on the Move." Though Mason's party is newly-formed, it is raising fundamental issues in San Francisco for the first time in many years. It has awakened voters to the necessity of deciding between reactionary, vigilante-supported, machine politicians or a strong labor candidate who promises to fight for the fundamental rights of labor, for adequate relief and for the preservation of civil liberties which have all but disappeared on the West Coast.

A. P. and Liberty League

A STEP regarded by newspapermen as having more than ordinary significance was taken by the Associated Press last week when it withdrew the

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WILLIAM BROWDER, *Business Manager*

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five-day week in its news departments in New York, Cleveland and Philadelphia. Its special significance is seen in the fact that the action took place almost immediately after the first meeting of the Associated Press Board of Directors following the declaration of the American Liberty League's lawyers that the Wagner-Lewis Labor Relations Act is unconstitutional. John W. Davis, a leading member of the lawyers' committee, is counsel for the Associated Press. The American Newspaper Guild, in which many members of the Associated Press news staff are enrolled, contends that the Wagner Act applies to the press associations because their business is obviously interstate in character. When word of the hour increase was made known the New York Guild national press association committee became active at once and a meeting of New York news staff was held. A strong protest was drawn up and by a vote of sixty-eight to four the Guild was designated as the bargaining agent of the employes. Those endorsing the protest and the designation of the Guild comprise about sixty-two percent of the New York Associated Press news staff and the total vote represents a gain of thirty in membership. Armed with this authority the Guild is preparing a vigorous fight to regain the old conditions.

Swope's Bedside Manner

MR. GERARD SWOPE is always in the headlines. Sometimes he is pictured drawing up blue prints for national recovery, at other times he is making commencement addresses and he seems to be the perennial chairman of the Committee for Mobilization for Human Needs. Parenthetically, he is also president of the General Electric Company, a point the newspapers make in the third or fourth paragraph of their stories depicting him as a modern St. George ever alert to slay the dragon of social ill. This year public health is Mr. Swope's particular concern. He has just cited figures disclosing that 120,000 infants die annually from preventable diseases and that 700,000 persons have tuberculosis which is controllable if there is adequate expenditure. Mr. Swope makes the point that it is up to citizens to dig down and contribute far more liberally to private health agencies supported by Community Chests. We suppose he is also aware that public health has declined enormously due to the malnutrition and undernourishment attendant on unemployment and inadequate wages. We wonder if he knows that the government could by adequate taxation of the rich provide funds to wipe out a large part of the sickness that worries him so much. Anyhow Mr. Swope and his friends are going to tell America just how sick it is through public meetings. "In each city," he says, "meetings will be preceded by a community-wide inquiry into community health conditions." We suggest that the meetings be preceded by an immediate increase in wages and reduction of hours for all workers employed in large industries such as, say, General Electric.

Government by Court

THE fate of all New Deal legislation will be decided within the next few months. A case involving the constitutionality of the Agricultural Adjustment Act is scheduled for decision at the present session of the Supreme Court. Petitions asking hearings on the Bankhead Cotton Control law, the authority of the government to make loans to municipalities for construction of electric power projects, the right of eminent domain in condemnation of sites for low-cost housing and the validity of the T.V.A. plan of selling current to cities are also on its docket. Steps are being taken to speed appeals on the Wagner labor law, the Guffey coal bill and social-security legislation. The court will probably evade direct decisions on the constitutionality of a number of these measures just as it dodged a direct holding on the N.R.A. for almost two years. Although identical legal questions are not involved in each case the decision on the A.A.A. will indicate the trend of the court's legal reasoning and forecast its holdings on other laws. The decisions will play a large part in the 1936 campaign.

Anti-Labor Sermons

FATHER COUGHLIN, who is a priest sometimes and a politician all the time, has opened up a school to teach children of his parishioners to hate Communism. Al Smith is on record with the injunction that "the right to hold property is a God-given right." Not to be outdone, Jasper E. Crane, vice-president of the munition-making Du Ponts, has just issued a little pamphlet advising churchmen to mind their own business. He is irked at Baptists, Methodists, Catholics and Congregationalists who have been pointing to defects in the profit system. "The church should keep aloof from specific prescriptions," Mr. Crane preaches, and "should play its role in the realm of moral principles, inculcating in the people of this country what we need most for our economic as well as our moral welfare: honesty, justice, industry, bravery, cooperation, brotherly love." The remarkable thing about these new converts is that all of them manage to couple up their burning faith with attacks on the working class. Even Mr. Crane shed a righteous tear or two over the "four million deaths by starvation in Russia" in 1933. He neglected to cite statistics on the number of deaths produced by the "honesty, justice, industry, bravery, cooperation and brotherly love" of the Du Ponts in marketing guns and explosives.

Who Murdered the Vets?

RED tape at Washington prevented the removal of veterans from the Florida keys camps in which hundreds of men lost their lives in the September 2 hurricane. Experienced engineers warned authorities that loss of life would result unless immediate evacuation was undertaken. Veterans were ready to leave Saturday but no train was sent for them until Monday although it had steam up and was ready to leave Sunday afternoon. Officers deserted when the storm approached and left the men to their fate. These are the answers given to the question as to who was responsible for the deaths of veterans quartered in light shacks in F.E.R.A. camps in a region notorious for the severity of its tropical storms. The testimony was given before an American Legion investigating committee and reveals that the deaths were caused by incompetence combined with cynical disregard of primary safety laws. A survivor testified that when Ray Shelton, who was in charge of three of the camps, was implored to do something he merely glanced up from a card game to say "There is nothing to worry about." He was reflecting the attitude in Washington where officials who were warned of the danger refused to direct a rescue train to remove the veterans. Administration apologists have already whitewashed the whole affair as an "Act of God." The investigation is answering Ernest Hemingway's question: "Who left you there?" It wasn't God. There is still his other question: "What's the punishment for manslaughter now?"

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Imperialism, Not A Race War

ITALY'S aggressions in Africa have stirred descendants of Africans the world over. There have been demonstrations in the West Indies and parades of French colonials in Paris. South Africans have warned England that Italy is setting off the spark of race war; Haiti has attacked Mussolini at Geneva. Negro and Italian children clashed in a Brooklyn school last week. Excited street-corner speakers in Harlem and other centers of Negro population, inveigh against Italy and Italians.

This feeling is easily understood. Ethiopia is the last of free Africa; the flags of a half-dozen conquering nations fly over every other country in that vast continent with the exception of Firestone-controlled Liberia. Wherever Africans live under a foreign flag they know oppression and exploitation. Freedom is cherished by the Africans and is worth fighting for.

But hatred for Mussolini and Italian fascism is in danger of slipping over into a wave of hatred for all white people. Chauvinists of the stripe of Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard have played their part with their preachments of the rising tide of color. The dream begins to intrigue colored people. The western world that once seemed so impregnable is caught in the web of economic reverse. Suppose the tide of color should rise— Suppose the dream should become reality and colored peoples the world over should find strength to throw off once and for all the shackles that have bound them so long—

The dream is a stirring one, but it neglects certain facts. It takes no account of the truth that some white men exploit other white men as viciously as they do black men, and that some black men would do the same if they had the chance. Japanese militarists may declaim all they wish, but brown Koreans suffer under their rule and it is Japan's fond dream that soon they will be able to subjugate yellow China and make of that ancient country an Africa of their own.

In their understandable nationalistic zeal, proponents of race-war are guilty of overlooking the equally important fact that in every imperialistic country, even in Italy, there are vast numbers of white people, victims of tyranny within their own border, who have no stomach for wars of colonial conquest. They know that no emotional hatred of colored peoples drives fascist Italy to invade Ethiopia. Opponents of fascism know that Mussolini seeks to escape the specter that haunts him at home: the knowledge that the Italian people will not always be content to live in poverty in the midst of plenty. Imperial Japan looks toward China and Soviet Siberia, and Nazi Germany hungers for the Ukraine for the same reasons. The masses in these countries are organizing too for the defeat of fascism at home and the defeat of the war plans of their own imperialist governments. Their aims are identical with those of oppressed colonial colored peoples.

In one nation the organized opponents of war and fascism have triumphed. The workers' government of the Soviet Union has no colonial ambitions. Nor does it seek war. Rather it is the most tenacious exponent of peace in the world today. Other nations seek war to escape conditions at home. The Soviet Union fights for peace to consolidate the victories of socialism because socialism abolishes hunger and destitution and want.

The Soviet Union has taken pains at Geneva to make its position plain. Maxim Litvinov, commissar of foreign affairs, long ago told the assembled diplomats that the Soviet Union supports the Ethiopian position in the dispute with Italy. He warned the League of Nations that it must be ready and willing to go to the limit to curb Italian aggression. Nor is the Soviet Union willing to become a partner to the proposed compromise under which Ethiopia would become a virtual protectorate of Italy. Even "acceptance of this proposal by Ethiopian representatives," has not changed this attitude, for as Kard Radek has written, "they agreed as a man would with a pistol at his head."

In their blind anger at Mussolini a few Negroes have refused to differentiate between white people who want war and those who want peace. Is not Mussolini white? Are not French and American and English imperialists white? Are not Russians white and are not some Communists white? Then away with all white people. Reflecting this spirit, The Crisis, organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, calls Soviet peace efforts "pious flubdub" and Walter White, its secretary, says that "Italy has set fire under the powder keg of *white* arrogance and greed, which seems destined to become an act of suicide for the so-called *white* world."

The Ethiopian government does not share this disparaging opinion of the Soviet Union's peace policy. In an interview with William Jones, European correspondent of The Baltimore Afro-American, Tercole Hawariate, Ethiopian delegate at Geneva, praised Litvinov's activities. When told that there were some who were attacking the Soviet position he exclaimed that there must be some mistake. Throughout the interview he insisted that the Soviet Union had, since the outbreak of the dispute with Italy, befriended Ethiopia in the League of Nations.

What else could the Soviet Union have done? Not even its wildest enemies accuse it of seeking colonies in Africa or elsewhere. The imperialists who connive at the conquest and partition of Ethiopia also plot against the Soviet Union. And for the same reasons; the hope of loot, the dream of war that will temporarily allay domestic unrest.

Fascism is the deadly enemy of all that the Soviet Union stands for; it is the greatest single force in the world that threatens workers, farmers and middle-class people, regardless of color. The roar of guns in Africa proves that it is an agent for the further enslavement of colored colonials. These natural allies against fascism cannot afford to play into the hands of their enemies by dissipating their strength through artificial quarrels based on color.

It is true, of course, that inasmuch as they are oppressed colonials, colored peoples have much in common. Their sympathies may well go out one to the other as first this group and then the other faces imperialist aggression. The common bond of color will give a powerful emotional content to their struggle. A considered cooperation with other enemies of imperialism will guarantee success.

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Ten Mooney Cases!

An Appeal for Funds for the Gallup Defendants

THE prosecution has closed its case against the ten Gallup miners. The defense will have no difficulty breaking down the testimony offered by state witnesses. But the trial will not be decided on the merit of the so-called "evidence." It is not a question of proving the men innocent. If it were, they could rest easy, for in a few weeks at the outside they would be free. Instead they face the death penalty or life imprisonment. Only the united and determined action of workers and liberals and anti-fascists throughout America can save them.

The facts of the case are easy enough to determine. They have really never been challenged. Spanish-American miners were unemployed. They took advantage of squatter rights—still valid in New Mexico—to build houses on land that was unoccupied and unused. Later, title of the land (not the houses) passed to the Gallup-American Coal Company. Most of the miners have been on relief. They lived in the shacks built by themselves until State Senator Vogel came along and thought he saw a chance to turn a penny. By a deal with the coal company that will not bear too close examination, the Senator acquired title to the land and demanded huge increases in rent, as much as ten to twelve times more than the miners had previously paid. When the unemployed protested, he went to Sheriff Carmichael of Gallup and demanded that those who refused to pay the rent he asked be evicted. The sheriff, not above a little pressure from his political boss and sure that evictions would be popular with the mine owners who had not forgotten that these very men had won a strike against the coal company back in 1933, started eviction proceedings. Victor Campos was ousted from his house. The miners retaliated by replacing the furniture. For this act, three leaders were arrested, among them Exiquio Navarro, a hero of the 1933 strike.

The miners were indignant. They marched to the courthouse on the day of Navarro's preliminary hearing to demand that the arrested be freed. The sheriff took a look at the crowd and hurried Navarro out of the courtroom toward the jail. The crowd, when it learned of this maneuver, rushed to the back of the courtroom. Unarmed miners were met with tear-gas bombs: the strong wind swept the gas back toward the deputies, blinding them. A deputy lost his head and fired. A crossfire followed from the other deputies: Sheriff Carmichael fell dead with two bullets in his head. The deputies killed two men and wounded many more of the miners and their wives.

No one was charged with the murder of the two miners. But immediately the Gallup authorities started a frenzied roundup of more than 600 members of the local mine union, swept into action, beating, torturing, intimidating. Two hundred men and women were arrested for "murder." By the time the preliminary hearing took place, forty-eight were still held on this charge. Robert Minor and David Levinson, who arrived to conduct the defense, were kidnaped by vigilantes, beaten unmercifully and abandoned in the desert. No member of the vigilantes was prosecuted for this violence.

Of the forty-eight originally charged with murder, ten were singled out for trial—ten union workers. They have been tried and retried for six months in the reactionary New Mexican press. At present they face a labor-hating judge and a jury (probably containing vigilantes) on which a man has already stated—during the trial—that he "knows" the defendants to be guilty.

The daily press, with the exception of The Daily Worker and a few labor papers, carries no mention of the case. New Mexico exercises a strict censorship on what goes on at Aztec, a little town miles away from a railroad, dominated by vigilantes. New Mexico is a tourist paradise—"so quaint, these Mexican peasants, and how beautiful the desert!" The Indians are performing their ceremonial dances. Come to New Mexico, urges the Chamber of Commerce—though it fails to mention that it is best to leave any liberal sentiment at home because vigilantes won't tolerate such ideas.

The trial takes place in an atmosphere of lynch hysteria. Judge McGhee has refused a change of venue on the ground that it would be "jumping out of the frying pan into the fire." He has refused to postpone the case (though intimidation has handicapped lawyers for the defense in preparing their course of action). Witnesses for the prosecution have admitted that their testimony was prepared by the prosecuting attorney and handed to them to memorize. Statements of witnesses conflict with statements made by the same persons at the preliminary hearing. Defendants have not been properly identified; there has been no evidence of violence on the part of the accused or of any others in the crowd fired at by deputies; none of the defendants was armed at the time of the shooting. Yet, despite the obvious innocence of the ten, they are in great danger of being convicted of murder.

The defense is costly. The necessity of publicity is pressing. THE NEW MASSES, opposed to fascism and fascist methods wherever and whenever they appear, urges its readers to protest the trial to Governor Clyde Tingley of New Mexico, to Judge James B. McGhee, to the Attorney-General, Frank L. Patton.

But more than that, money is needed for the defense. THE NEW MASSES therefore asks its readers and friends to contribute to the defense fund; the pressing need makes an immediate response urgent if the ten defendants are to be saved.

We feel sure that the readers and friends of THE NEW MASSES will answer this call. Contributions received by us will be handed over to the Gallup Defense Committee which is supported by organized labor, liberal, non-sectarian, non-partisan groups and by the American Civil Liberties Union in conjunction with the International Labor Defense.

The ten Gallup miners must not be railroaded to the penitentiary. The cases are of vital importance to all opposed to fascism, to all opposed to the attempt by reactionary forces to deny fundamental civil liberties in America.

Send contributions to the Gallup Defense Fund Committee, c/o THE NEW MASSES, 31 East 27th Street, New York City.

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"BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE!"

William Gropper

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What Is Britain's Game?

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON, Oct. 14.

LAST night I was reading Thomas More's *Utopia.* I came on the passage where More describes how all the governments in Europe were, in his day, plotting and planning alliances and counter-alliances. They were anxiously asking where Spain stood; should they combine with the Pope against the Empire or with the Empire against the Pope; would Venice cooperate; had Genoa a good fleet; etc. Then More adds, above all every one of them is asking "What is to be done with England?" Europe certainly has not changed much in four hundred years for the supreme question for every European government is still, "What is to be done with England?"

The British government in other words is pursuing now as then its own peculiar, tortuous, temporizing, subtle and secret line of diplomacy. As the present peculiarly acute phase of the now permanent European crisis develops, the British game becomes more and more involved. I do not pretend to be able to unravel it altogether, but so far as I can see the main strands are these—the British government has set itself the following objectives:

1. To bring Mussolini to terms, that is to say, to prevent him from annexing more African territory than Britain desires him to annex, to make him feel the traditional dependence of Italy on Great Britain, to knock out of his head any ideas he has of turning nasty and cutting the imperial route to India.

2. To preserve the League of Nations' system of collective security from the complete destruction which it would suffer if no attempt was made to restrain another piece of aggression that is even more flagrant than that of the Japanese in Manchuria. The British government is far from wholehearted in its support of the League system, but on the other hand it feels a bit scared at the idea of letting it go to smash. Moreover, the British government has still to consider the sentiments of the British people, especially as it is just going to face an election and the British people are passionately in favor of supporting the League system of collective security. No less than 11,000,000 votes were recently cast in favor of the League in a ballot organized by the League of Nations Union in Britain. While democracy lasts in Britain, no British government can fail to make a show at least of supporting the League and its principles.

3. The British government is deeply perturbed by the race conflict which a flagrantly unprovoked aggression by a white power on a black race may provoke. The British Empire is fully half black or brown. The British government dreads perhaps above everything else the prospect of the colored races being provoked to mutual defence. It desires to make a show at any rate of protecting their interests against the aggression of Italy.

These are the three objectives of Great Britain's new and to many surprising "loyalty to the League." But these are not the only objectives of Great Britain in Europe. If they were, British problems would be much simpler.

4. Great Britain is determined to accomplish the restraint of Italy and the preservation of the League system without seriously or permanently committing herself to the support of the League. That is the meaning of Hoare's letter to the French. The French, desperately trying as every European government has been trying for four hundred years to pin Britain down to something, made this inquiry:

"If we," said the French, "come and pull your chestnuts out of the fire now by working sanctions, will you promise to do the same for us if our interests are attacked by Hitler?" And what reply did they get, wrapped up in yards and yards and yards of oracular cotton wool? They got this reply from the British government: "Circumstances alter cases. Maybe we should support you if you were attacked by Hitler and maybe we shouldn't, but now hurry up and support us against Mussolini." That was the reply the French got and that is the explanation of why the French are pulling the League punches so that they seem likely to turn into pats on the back for Mussolini.

Macken

In other words, it is at bottom the British government and not the French that is responsible for the crippling of the League of Nations and its obvious feebleness in restraining the aggressor. Of course Mussolini may be beaten none the less, but if he is it will be Ethiopia's resistance rather than League measures that will beat him.

And why is the British government willing to cripple the League of Nations even when the League is engaged in protecting British interests? It is willing to do this rather than give a firm pledge that it stands with France, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia against German aggression. For though it is half frightened of Hitler, one of the British government's principal aims at the moment is to employ Hitler, is to occupy him in the eastward push towards and against the Soviet Union.

In an interesting letter which Stresemann, just before he died, wrote to the Crown Prince, he spoke of one possible future for Germany. He suggested that Germany might become "the sword of England." It is for this ignoble function that Hitler after all his brave talk of national independence now offers his country. The British government is half frightened to wield so formidable a sword lest one day it turn on its paymaster. But so far it has by no means refused the offer. We shall see how this almost incredibly complex situation will develop.

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Europe's Crisis: Japan Prepares

Anti-Imperialist Front Grows in China as Invasion Nears

HANSU CHAN

Manchukuo is a very nice country, but it has no gold. The Maritime Provinces (Eastern Siberia) have gold. They also have fish, timber, many things Japan needs. When we get ready we shall take them. This will be the first result of the Italo-Ethiopian war.

THUS speaks Colonel Kenji Matsumoto, Japanese Military attache in Washington. Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen, who published the above statement in a syndicated column of Washington news, also state that there are ample reports "indicating all too vividly Japan's plans for taking not merely Eastern Siberia, but the Chinese Coast, Hongkong and even the Dutch East Indies."

Thus, the African war has greatly intensified the speed in the development of all the antagonisms in the world. It seems merely a matter of time before the war will spread to Europe and Asia. In the Far East, it is significant to note that Japan's policy for the conquest of China is closely adjusted to the necessity of making Manchuria, Mongolia and North China a major battlefront in the coming war. Now, with Japan's hands untied by the African war, it is to be expected that she should follow up the logical development of her Far Eastern policy and make war in the Far East an immediate concern. Colonel Matsumoto's brazen statement has merely confirmed this tendency. In order to understand the further development of this tendency, it will be necessary to examine carefully the policy followed by Japan in her adventures in China.

In the development of its China policy, Japan had never treated the whole of China as one unit and dealt with it as such. Instead, she has decided to conquer China section by section and consequently has adopted different lines of policy in dealing with North, Central and South China. The development of the African war or any other major developments in world politics, of course, will greatly affect Japan's policy in China and cause it to deviate from its present course. Thus we must guard against a mechanical interpretation of the comparatively less-aggressive policy which Japan has adopted in regard to South and Central China and bear in mind the cardinal fact that the Japanese imperialists will take advantage of every change of circumstance to press forward their ultimate aim of the conquest of the whole of China. However, for the time being, it is important to realize that Japan is primarily engaged in the consolidation of its control in Inner Mongolia and North China and is making the necessary preparations for a major war in this region.

The Japanese realize that partly due to its geographical contiguity to the British Crown Colony, Hongkong, and partly due to historical reasons, South China (Kwantung and Kwangsi provinces) more than any other part of China is dominated by British interests. The real capital of the so-called Southeastern government is not Canton, but Hongkong. Chen Chi-tang, the Canton militarist dictator, may occasionally flirt with other powers, but he seldom, if ever, acts without British consent and is primarily a tool of British interests. Great Britain, therefore, guards her sphere of interests in South China more jealously than those in other parts of China. Not wishing to go *too far* in challenging British interests *at this stage of the game,* Japan adopts a comparatively more restrained attitude toward this region. This, of course, does not mean that Japan will not attempt to use pressure on the British and their Chinese militarist tools in order to force concessions from Britain. A case in point is the recent Japanese naval display at Swatow which aimed to intimidate Canton officials from punishing Japanese rice importers for their flat refusal to pay taxes. But the purpose of these Japanese maneuvers in South China, at least for the time being, is not to press for exclusive Japanese control, but to obtain specific concessions with regard to this region. It is important, however, to realize that, as indicated by the Leith-Ross mission to the Far East, Anglo-Japanese antagonisms in the Far East have lately been very much sharpened. The Leith-Ross mission is attempting to adjust Anglo-Japanese relations by negotiations. But, once Britain is involved in a major war, the situation will be very different.

As to Central China, which is just another designation for the Yangtze Valley, the situation is somewhat different. Here also British interest dominates, but not as exclusively as in South China. The United States, France and other powers also have vested interests and are striving to get more. Consequently, Japan is bolder in extending her control into this region, but she does not yet think the time ripe to put it on an equal footing with North China. All recent indications show that her policy in this region is to maintain Chiang Kai-shek in power as the tool of Japan and to prevent him from flirting with the other powers, especially Great Britain and the United States. The often heard Japanese press propaganda about Chiang Kai-shek's so-called "anti-Japanism" is neither a reflection of the true state of affairs nor a sham attack to conceal Chiang Kai-shek's part in the surrender of North China. It rather represents a well-planned campaign to condition Chiang Kai-shek's reflex, so to speak, in regard to his attitude toward Japan, just as a newly-acquired dog is trained by continuous admonitions and spanking in order to "fix" his loyalty to the new master. How well the Japanese imperialists have succeeded can be seen from a most recent event. On September 25 Major General Hayao Tada, commander of the Japanese Army in North China, launched a sweeping attack against Nanking and warned that unless Chiang Kai-shek amended his manners toward Japan he would be overthrown. On the next day Nanking officials announced that General Ho Ying-ching, Minister of War and Chiang Kai-shek's right-hand man, would be sent to Japan in October "as an unofficial emissary of Chiang Kai-shek, with authorization to confer with Japanese leaders and try to clarify Chiang's attitude toward Sino-Japanese relations." (New York Herald Tribune, Sept. 27, 1935). The time sequence of the two events is no mere coincidence. It illustrates that Chiang Kai-shek has become more and more used to Japan's way of command. So long as Chiang Kai-shek remains this way, there is very little likelihood that the Japanese will replace him. Japan is also not likely to attempt to introduce any serious constitutional changes in the Nanking government, as she is set upon doing in regard to North China. However, as soon as conditions permit, Japan will certainly not hesitate to do to the Yangtze Valley as she has done to Manchuria and North China.

JAPAN'S policy toward the five provinces in North China and Inner Mongolia—Hopei, Shansi, Shantung, Chahar and Suiyuan, is far more ambitious than its program in South and Central China. As the Peiping correspondent of the British-owned Hongkong Daily Press openly admits in a dispatch dated June 20, the Japanese are in "complete control of North China . . . in fact if not in name." But Japanese imperialism is not satisfied with "mere control" in this region. It aims further to consolidate its position and to develop North China into an economic and military base for war against the Chinese Revolution and the Soviet Union.

In the sphere of economic policy, Japanese imperialism concentrates upon bringing about the centralized control, in Japanese hands, of existing economic enterprises, the

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improvement of communications, linking North China with Mongolia and Manchuria, the exploitation of coal mining in Shansi province and the development of cotton plantations which would make Japan independent of American cotton. These measures are to be effected through the organization of the so-called Japan-"Manchukuo"-China economic bloc, and the actual control of these policies will be put in the hands of the South Manchurian Railway Company, headed by the arch-fascist Matsouka. It is important to note that the development of manufacturing has never been part of Japan's economic plan in China. The purpose of the Japan-"Manchukuo"-China economic bloc is not to industrialize Manchuria and China but to extract the natural mining and forest wealth of these regions as well as to convert them into agricultural appendages of Japanese imperialism.

Recent developments clearly indicate that, together with their efforts to establish economic hegemony and organize the exploitation of North China and Inner Mongolia, the Japanese authorities are preparing for drastic political and constitutional changes in North China. On September 26 General Tada, commander of the Japanese Army in North China, openly declared in an interview that "a political set-up, politically as well as economically independent of Nanking, is necessary in North China." (New York Times, Sept. 27, 1935.) Thus, the persistent rumor that Japan aims to establish a second "Manchukuo" in North China is officially confirmed. Not only in fact but also in name, soon North China will be torn from the map of China!

WHAT is the immediate objective of these feverish political and military activities on the part of the Japanese in North China? The question was answered by General Tada himself who, in the same interview from which the above quotation was taken, states baldly that China must "cooperate with Japan" in order to "save" herself from possible sovietization. A few days earlier, on September 10, Major General Bensuke Isogai, Military Attache of the Japanese Embassy at Peiping, spoke even more frankly. "Japan will not tolerate the establishment of a Communist government in any portion of China or in any other part of Eastern Asia, but will act independently to destroy such a regime." (New York Times, September 10, 1935).

These remarks clearly do not only refer to China but also to Soviet Siberia. They are statements of policies which have already been carried out to a considerable extent. Besides closely coordinating their economic and political plans with Japan's military needs, the Japanese Army in North China some time ago had already stationed a military mission in Kalgan, the chief strategic city astride the line of communication between North China, Outer Mongolia and the Soviet Union. A recent Reuter report from Peiping states that the Japanese military authorities have decided to establish special military missions at Taiyuanfu, Kweihua and Ninghsia City. As early as August 7 the Ashai Shinbum (Tokyo) reported that an agreement had been made between Colonel Takahashi and General Yen Hsi-shan, military head of Shansi and Suiyuan, "to prevent all North China from turning Red." The report further stated that General Yen had definitely agreed to accept Japanese military "cooperation" in preventing the bolshevization of the Ninghsia-Suiyuan area. A similar agreement is reported to have been concluded with General Fu Tso-yee, the governor of Suiyuan. Thus, having established a network of permanent army institutions in the most strategic cities in North China and Mongolia and having concluded agreements for military "cooperation" with Chinese militarists, the Japanese Army is ready, at a moment's notice, to march against the Chinese Red Army and its ally, the anti-Japanese troops in North China.

IN ITS campaign against the Chinese revolutionists in China, Japanese imperialism finds many allies. True, as far as the military aspect of the campaign is concerned, practically all anti-Soviet groups realize that, at least for the present, Japan is the only power in a position to undertake the struggle against the Chinese revolutionists in North China. But in other aspects, especially in press propaganda, a horde of correspondents are actually aiding Japan. In view of the fact that the Red Army and its allies are the only forces in China that are effectively offering resistance to Japanese invasion it is clear that all those who attack the Chinese Soviets and the Red Army objectively render assistance to the Japanese. There are numerous American journalists of different political color and shades of opinion who are "cooperating" in this way with Japanese imperialism, but whoever has followed the writings of Harold Isaacs, Alexander Buchman, Frank Glass and Wilbur Burton in The China Press, The China Weekly Review, Asia, Pacific Affairs, New International, etc., realizes that these American Trotskyist journalists are the most vicious and most dangerous of the whole lot of reactionary journalists.

Hiding behind a barrage of Marxist phraseology (which none of them has yet learned to manipulate with facility), these people are energetically conducting a campaign of lies against the Communist International, the Chinese Communist Party, the Soviet Union, the Chinese Soviets and the Chinese Red Army, a campaign which aims to undermine the confidence of the outside world in the Chinese Soviet movement and the Red Army.

Small wonder, then, that when Chiang Kai-shek picked a group of foreign journalists to visit Kiangsi which had just been "recovered" from the Red troops, he excluded the representative of the Tass, official Soviet news agency, but included Alexander Buchman. Buchman took the so-called "evidence" of Red devastation provided by Chiang Kai-shek's agents at its face value, and published, without demurring, a photo of a supposed "Red Execution Ground," supplied by the Kuomintang, in which the skulls and skeletons were so obviously arranged and faked that even some of the bourgeois journalists, such as Randall Gould of The Shanghai Evening Post and Mercury, refused to credit it. Buchman is also responsible for the circulation of a faked photograph of Chu Teh, the Commander in Chief of the Chinese Red Army, which gave that beloved leader of the Chinese masses the face of a mad bandit.

Not content with slandering the Chinese Soviet movement as such, these people also direct their attack against Agnes Smedley, the honest, courageous and talented writer who has perhaps done more than any other individual in popularizing the Chinese Revolution to the English-speaking public and is arousing sympathy and support for the cause of China's liberation. Some of them hounded Agnes Smedley all over Shanghai, going to desperate extremes to snuff her out. Provocateur rumors were circulated that Madame Sun Yet-sen was hiding Agnes Smedley in her home in the French Concession, although at that time Smedley was actually in a sanatorium, seriously ill and desperately in need of tranquillity. Joining the chorus of the most reactionary reviewers, these people branded Smedley's *Chinese Destinies* and *Red Army Marches* as gross exaggerations—products of the imagination. Through their slanders against Smedley and her books, they attempt to strike at the Chinese Revolution, to sow the seeds of confusion and distrust, thus hoping to accomplish their disruptive task. Consciously or unconsciously they act as agents of Japanese imperialism and vanguard of the counter-revolution in China.

BUT the extraordinary vitality of the Chinese Revolution and its growing strength is a fact that no amount of slander can destroy. Particularly during the last few months, stimulated by Japan's advance to North China and Nanking's betrayal and the critical world-situation, new developments in China have opened new perspectives for a very broad anti-imperialist struggle in China. In this broad united anti-imperialist movement, three constituent factors can be clearly discerned at this stage of development.

First there is the Soviet movement, with its Soviet territories and the Red Army. It is already an old story that the westward march of the main bodies of the Red Army from its former base in Kiangsi to Szechwan has been eminently successful and has not only defeated the plan of Chiang Kai-shek's sixth anti-Red campaign, but has unified the most important branches of Red forces under Mao Tse-tung, Che Teh and

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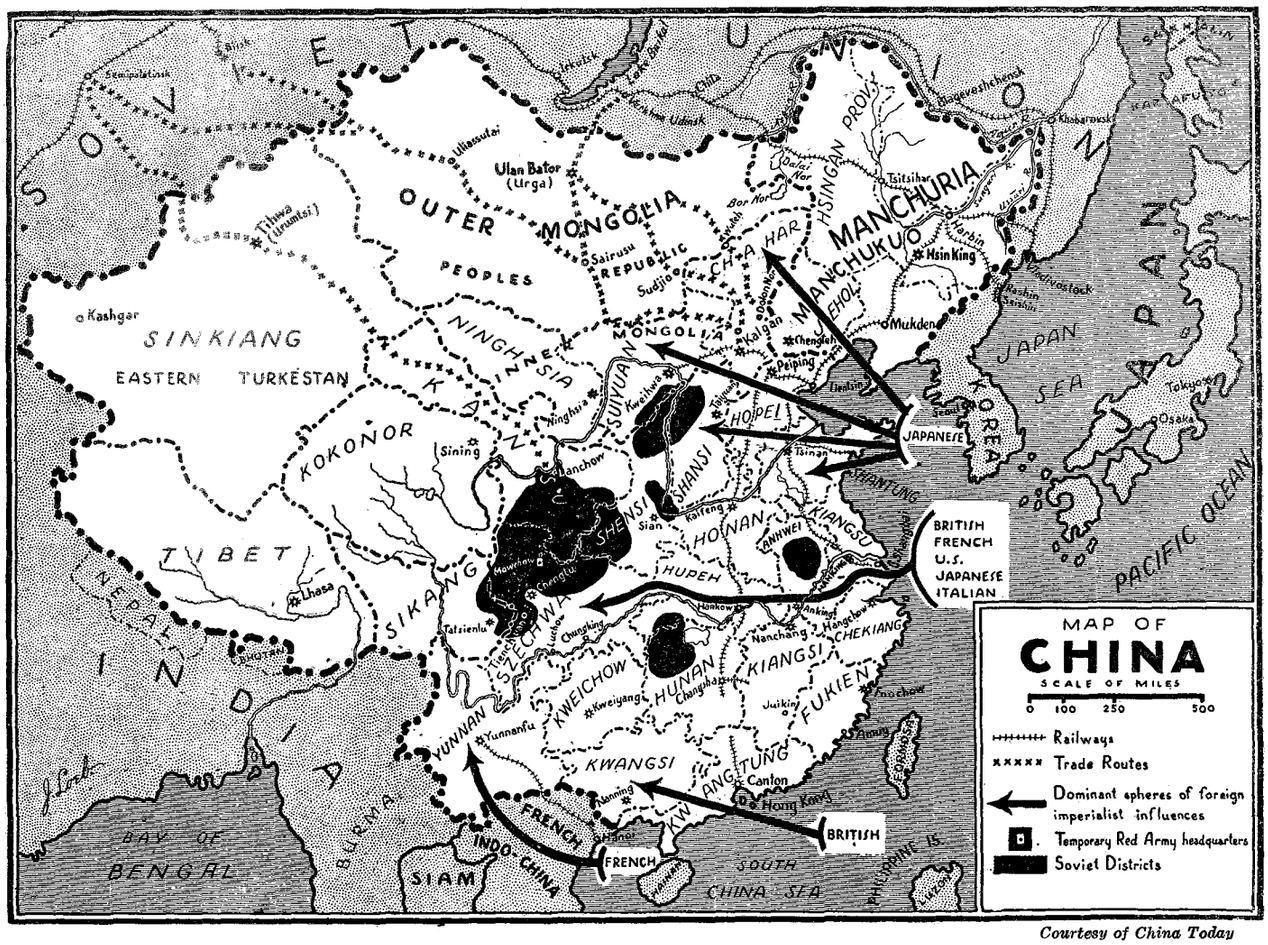

Courtesy of China Today

Hsu Hsian-chien. In the meantime Soviet forces under Ho Lung are making fresh conquests in Hunan and Hopei provinces. Recently, through the extension of the Soviet movement northwestward, large Soviet districts have been established in Kansu, Shensi, and Ninghsia, and new possibilities for the Soviet development thus have been opened. The degree of Red successes in this region can be seen from the interviews given by General Kao Kwei-tsu, chief commanding officer of the anti-Red government forces in this region. Having fought more than a hundred unsuccessful battles against the Red troops, he states significantly that "At present the government forces in the region are very weak. The present situation in North China is like that in Kiangsi in 1931." (China Weekly Review, Aug. 17, 1935). When it is remembered that 1931 was the year when the Chinese Soviet Government was organized in Kiangsi, the present condition of Soviet power in North China can easily be imagined!

In a careful survey of recent Red developments in China in the current issue of China Today (October, 1935), Lawrence Hearn points out the great significance of the growth of the Soviet Movement in North China:

> The Communists, therefore, are soon likely to dominate completely the portion of China northwest of a line running roughly through Chengtu in Szechwan to Sianfu in Shensi and on to Taiyuanfu in Shansi. This region comprises the part of Szechwan already under their control; Kansu, into which they are rapidly pouring; western and northern Shensi, where they are already entrenched; and northern Shansi, where a considerable area has for some time been under their control. Beyond these provinces lie Chinghai and Sinkiang, in the semi-circle of Chinese border territories affected by the example of the Soviet Union, and the provinces of Inner Mongolia, where the Japanese are fast extending their military rule. Beyond Inner Mongolia is the Outer Mongolian People's Republic, friendly to the Soviet Union.
>
> Thus Japan's penetration into Inner Mongolia and across the provinces of North China brings them face to face with territories already liberated under the guidance of the Soviet Union, in the process of liberation, or else rapidly being occupied by the Chinese Red armies. It is hardly to be wondered at that Japanese imperialists cry alarm at the Communist "menace." And in view of the likelihood that the Red armies will be able to turn a united front anti-Japanese movement in North China into an anti-Chiang Kai-shek movement as well, it is hardly surprising that Nanking looks to the Japanese for military cooperation against their common enemy, the defenders of the Chinese people.

Besides the Soviet districts and regular Red Army troops, the Red partisan troops are operating in various parts of the country—in practically all the territories formerly occupied by the Red forces. It is the policy of the Communists to set up, before every strategic retreat from a Soviet territory, underground Communist Party units, Soviet government organs and military committees and secret munition-stores and repair shops to carry on revolutionary work despite White occupation. Thus, though the Red Army may sometimes be forced to withdraw from a region, it never abandons it. Red partisan troops also operate in the territory surrounding the actual Soviet territories and in Manchuria. These Red partisan areas include almost all of Kiangsi, most of Fukien, large sections of Kweichow, Hunan, Hupeh, Anhwei and the eastern part of Manchuria.

Politically less developed than the Red partisans but just as determined to fight against Japanese invasion are the anti-Japanese volunteer troops. Together with the Red partisans these valiant fighters have been battling against the Japanese in Manchuria ever since 1931. Japanese army headquarters at Changchun reported on November 24, 1934, that the Japanese Army had been involved in approximately 18,000 encounters with the Manchurian volunteers in the three months of September, October, and November, 1934. Recent Japanese official figures give the total of armed anti-Japanese forces in Manchuria as 28,000. Many anti-Japanese volunteer corps have already been organized in North China. Under the stimulus of a growing anti-Japanese movement these troops, mostly composed of workers, poor peasants and former soldiers, are bound to become a formidable power against Japan. This is the second factor in the anti-imperialist front.

The third factor in the anti-imperialist

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front is the emergence of anti-Japanese, anti-Kuomintang, and anti-Chiang Kai-shek political groupings which are being drawn closer and closer to the revolutionary leadership provided by the Soviet movement, and the growth of anti-Japanese sentiment and activities in the various mass organizations. The growing discontent of the masses of the Chinese people over Chiang Kai-shek's capitulation to Japan is becoming more and more crystallized into articulate political action. It expresses itself in the strengthening of the Soviet movement as well as in the formation of anti-Japanese and anti-Nanking groups bound to become effective factors in the broad united anti-imperialist front in China.

Organizing these various factors for concerted action and serving as the rallying center for the entire Chinese people in its struggle for emancipation, are the Chinese Soviets. The Chinese Soviet leaders realize that under the present critical situation in China and in the world, the extension of the Soviet movement and the strengthening of the Red Army must be combined with the development of the people's anti-imperialist movement all over the country. Thus, through an open declaration at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, Wang Ming, an outstanding leader of the Communist Party of China and the Communist International, took the initiative in calling for the formation of a *United People's Government of National Defense.* Addressing his appeal to "all parties, groups, military units, mass organizations, and prominent politicians that are ready to join [an anti-imperialist front]," Wang Ming makes the following statement:

> I declare from this international platform that the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Soviet government are ready to take the initiative in negotiations for the formation of such a government, and to join with all who do not want to be colonial slaves, on the basis of a program which can be accepted by all, for the saving of our native country, apart from differences of opinion in other important questions. The Red Army is ready to fight in the foremost ranks of this united army, hand-in-hand with all other armies, on the sole condition that these armies cease their attacks on the Red Army, and really fight against Japanese imperialism and its agents. The Communist Party of China, in program, strategy and tactics, is a party of the whole Chinese people in the struggle for its national and social emancipation. It is the sole party of national hope and national glory of the Chinese people.

Coming at the most appropriate and decisive moment, this historic statement is a landmark in the Chinese liberation movement. It gives signal to a powerful united drive against Japanese imperialism and for the national liberation and independence of China, a drive that is bound to be a weighty factor in the development of the world war and in shaping the future of world history.

Looking For Elmer

J. S. B.

St. Louis.

THE scene on lower Washington Avenue is the most frenzied and determined since the days the boys came home from France. The march of the American Legion army is not scheduled to start for some hours yet, but all through the day the townspeople have been moving in, curious and made in a mood for excitement by the news that hundreds of special trains are backing into Union Station; by stories run for weeks in newspapers and featured on radio programs telling what great funmakers these boys are and what's to expect here. It is the third day of the five-day convention, the seventeenth annual one of the series, and now by late afternoon, with flivvers clattering, rubber balls bouncing, miniature cannon thundering, excitement and expectation is at its height.

Five o'clock. Sticks to slap you with, ticklers to fan you with: the corners where the parade will pass and turn are black with civilians, legionnaires and hawkers competing, sprinting, dancing and crying wares. Overhead, blimps soar and airplanes zip and dip, already boosting Cleveland for the Convention next year in 1936. Here, an Indian from Wisconsin stomps around in warpaint and feathers and circles goggle-eyed Daddy, Mommy and the Kiddies, making boom-boom dances and beating a drum for them. There, spic-and-spanners from California-of-course strut in white overseas caps singing Here I Come. Women auxiliaries from all over the nation wave swagger canes and beer bottles and stagger around in Sam Browne belts and berets shouting as how they don't give a whoop or recipe in hell have they left the gas jets on at home or not. A searchlight picks up and whitewashes the first showing in the world of "Red Salute" at the Ambassador Theater, all about a Girl who is a Red and not a soldier and a Boy who is a soldier and not a Red, and how the Boy redeems the Girl through Love and makes a real soldier of her. Oo-oo-oo, screams an ambulance, stuck in the human ruts. And twenty hands jerk up a drunk lying in the gutter, mailing him to heaven special delivery in a blanket.

Five o'clock. By six o'clock it's like five minutes till the Day of Judgment and only five lousy minutes left with everything yet to be packed. Christmas Day and New Year's Eve all in one. The papers told the truth for once, so far as it goes. Everybody's funny, everybody's out for a good time or else. The funniest guys of all, just as the papers said they would be, are the honor-boys and comedy-kids of the Legion, the crack Elmer-chasers of the Society of Forty and Eight. Wearing beards and purple noses and running around in lace panties and pneumatic dugs, they're everywhere.

How they are funny is like this. They stand in windows in hotels and rooming houses and when a fellow passes, the damn fool, they shout, "Hey, you with the pressed pants!" He looks up. "ME?"

"Yeah, you. Where's Elmer?" Then they empty a bucket of water over him. Does he yelp, they give him another. Some people put up a lot of yelp, that's who it's a pleasure to give it to, don't know what funny is.

That's not the only way the boys of the Forty and Eight are funny. Seventeen years of working out exact routines in every major city has not gone for nothing. They have other ways. They take a notion to seat themselves cross-legged in the street on the car-tracks with the conductor bowlegged and fish them out a pair of craps and a little loose change and settle for an hour, they will do it. You are out walking with your best girl or your only wife and one of them takes a notion to like her rump for the purpose, he will apply a little dojigto it will let out a noise should never be heard from that end of the body and that will be so funny it will kill you if you know what's good for you. Or if you are a girl by yourself you are liable to find your skirts lifted, not too far up of course, because fun's fun and a seal "Government Inspected Meat" slapped onto the fat part of your behind. In one place outside the swanky Lennox, this fellow's double will have a pal in the crowd lift your hat which he then proceeds to toss into the air and blow into atoms with a miniature cannon brought to St. Louis for that purpose and that may not kill you right away, but it will everybody else and your turn at being killed will no doubt come later, for after all you had but one hat with you. Or you will be riding through traffic and suddenly you see one of these boys standing with his back turned to you and he is reading a paper or looking for Elmer. Naturally you don't want to hit him, so you stop and here is one very funny thing. He doesn't even look around to see if you have stopped, but just sort of squats and there he is on your mudguard. Other 40 and 8ers will then appear and then they all sit down, some drawing up chairs

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and then they are quite liable to have them a little talk.

"Can you tell me what is the price of potatoes in Sweden?" one is very likely to ask.

"What's that got to do with the price of peas in Oshkosh?" may well be the answer to that.

They can keep this up for hours, hopping from one car to another so's not to let the thing become monotonous or stale, sometimes making out like what's keeping them detained on the mudguard is a general need of sleep after a night of looking for Elmer, sometimes making out like it's the paper they just got to read to know just how much or badly the Cardinals, the hometown pride here and a team they hate this year with a ferocious and a worked-out venom, have been licked and in all cases finishing the matter with a military inspection. This being an operation which calls for a lifting of the hood and the inserting therein of a firecracker, the same being done without telling the driver what has been done, just telling him to drive on and not to let it happen again—a joke which is sure fire, if you see what I mean.

By six-thirty, by parade-time, that's how it is up and down the line, from down Mississippi River way on out to Grand Avenue. The whole police force is on duty but has orders not to interfere with anything short of murder. The citizens know how this is and many take the horseplay along with the rest of it with no beef raised, looking out for number one and holding close to the girl-friend or the wife and kids.

So that's how it is. Drums beat. Boys hoot. Horns sound off continuously. Welcome Legion signs are everywhere where business men and the arrangements committee got together. "Where's Elmer?" the cry is made an excitement to laughter, to hell with why, to hysteria, an excuse for all the hell-raising can be stored up in a year prosaic with scrubbing and cooking, terrible with looking for work or breaking strikes, as the case may be and picking your nose over what will be the weather tomorrow.

OUT in front, out on the street's where the fun's at. In the Municipal Auditorium is where the work's done for which the other is overcoat and cover. High marble ceilings lend the scene here austerity and pomp. Outside's for the rank-and-filers, for Elmer. Here are others. There a general of the regulars leans forward in rapt attention. There a ward captain leans over to whisper to a National Guard colonel. Elmer is king outside but can't be found, but here are the king-makers. As I listen to reports and resolutions hammering out the bitter, the prejudiced, the dead-serious program of the Legion for the coming year, I think of many things but mostly of the great multitudes outside who follow still without knowing.

On the huge platform, the war eagle tweets sweet like a Broadway crooner. Governors of thirteen states sit close enough together to crunch fleas off each others backs. Not a man with a leg missing, not a man with a hole in his pockets. The burning of books and the rumble of drums sleep fitful under eyelids narrowed in calculation of votes and privileges. Merriam, California. Belgrano, Hearst's rival. Governor Graves of Alabama. After the greetings of these, their assurances that America is in safe hands here, they KNOW it is, their words based on the history of the past and primed for the future and all the time full of please forget-me-not and roses, comes the business end of things. With pride that St. Louis, which we must never forget is the sharer with Paris, France, in the birth of the American Legion on seventeen long and glorious years ago, has seen her duty and is doing it. And you may be sure that the spirits of the big companies and corporations, Philipps Petroleum Co., for instance, advertised on the *voitures,* the boxcars of the parading Legion outside, hovers close and seeps low somewhere in the hall over the destinies of these lovers of the arts of peace and the welfare of America.

The program emerges. John D. Crowley, *Chef de Chemin de Fer,* that's French for chief of the iron road and head man of the afore-mentioned Society of Forty Men and Eight Horses, opens up with a war on Reds of every color including pinks and greens and that, it hurts me to record, includes liberals and pacifists. In rapid succession others follow with resolutions calling for: military training in C.C.C. camps and *admission* of destitute veterans to such camps: deportation of immigrants illegally in this country, further restriction of immigration, deportation of aliens on relief; a campaign to "Buy American"; withdrawal of recognition of Russia; combatting of Communism; forbidding of the use of public schools for peace programs; expansion of the program for national defense. There are several hundreds of resolutions in all. The three main objectives of the Legion are classified as: Americanization; child welfare; national self-interest. Immediately payment of the bonus is passed unanimously this year, but the mode of payment is left up to the government. Legislation is asked giving veterans absolute preference in civil service, in retention and in promotion.

The papers are full of all this tomorrow. But not quite. All the welcomes are listed. It is mentioned that Madame Ernestine Schumann-Heink sang a song called "There Is No Death," that three of her sons were in the American Army and that one other went down in the service of the German Navy, that she will be presented with a rare citation bestowed so far on only about a dozen people. The pageantry of the massing of the colors and the beauty of it, the bugler blowing assembly, the column of flags moving down the center aisle of the great hall receives all the notice. Twenty-eight troops of Boy Scouts are mentioned as having helped out a lot here and there, directing delegates. And the great broadcasting companies do their bit and the chamber of commerce shakes hands with itself all over again. Not a word of criticism anywhere. Not a word of dissent or analysis. No voice of a Paul Crosbie or a Smedley Butler. If you're such a serious thinker, the place for you is down in the parade and to hell with you.

CRUSHED on the sidewalk where the parade's swinging by, I witness a curious thing. I'd been standing there for hours, it seems, watching the never-ending sweep of flags and *voitures,* thinking of the militarism and the conservatism of the men back in the great halls, wondering now at the cheering and the seeming enthusiasm of those around me, what it might be worth in terms of crisis and struggle, in times to come, when it happened, strangely like a complementing of my unspoken question, and perhaps an answer.

The parade was on. The boys were swinging by. Baton-majors, male and now and then female, pranced delicate and precise like fine horses, heads high. Uniforms the rioting of every color went by, thousands on thousands, bands after bands after bands behind and in front hot gasoline poured on the crowd's roaring. There were funny-buggies for those wanted to laugh, war flags for those wanted to cheer. "Where's Elmer?" as the cowboys from Colorado went by. "Hey; you with the flapping lips, have you seen Elmer?" as the Californians passed. Somebody was singing, I remember. A song called whiskey and water, by God! it's a drink. There was calling for Elmer. Laughter. Cheers.

And in between a band and a band came the first sight of the kind seen in the whole time of the parade. A cripple. A thing nasty to look at with the legs gone riding on crutches. Instantly silence. The papers next day say the crowd grew quiet in awe at the man's bravery. Perhaps. I don't know. All I know is that the crowd where I was grew quiet, with the strangest sort of quiet there is—the kind comes in the middle of a sound shut off. And while I won't say for sure what the crowd meant by this quiet, I'll make a guess.

Up ahead of this man riding on crutches, the band stopped playing, taking a rest in the long march. But the drums beat on. Back of him came more flags, but the band there hadn't started up yet. In this double hush where the crowd is quiet and the bands are quiet, a man in the press around me speaks up—a guy with one leg missing.

"There he is," he shouts. His finger pointing, his lips twisted in a grin, there's nothing mirthful about it.

"Who?" says the copper holding in the line, pushing back. Nervous, pushing too hard.

"The guy they're looking for," laughs the cripple, hopping on his one leg. And in the hush of many faces staring at him, he waves an arm, gathers breath into his lungs and yells, a long equine bray, "oh, *E-e-e-el*-mer!"

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Three Lynch Affidavits

By ALABAMA SHARECROPPERS

Mrs. Annie Mae Meriwether, widow of a murdered sharecropper; Wesley Smith, fifty-six-year-old tenant farmer who escaped a mob by only a few seconds; and Henry Roberts, who has never gone to school in his twenty-seven years and has picked cotton ever since he can remember, are in New York. They came to tell the story of their personal experiences during a recent cotton-pickers' strike in Alabama. The incidents they describe under oath are records of brutality that might not be believed if they were not told in the form of affidavits. The only crime of which these people were guilty was that of belonging to the Sharecroppers' Union and aiding in a strike that if successful, would have meant the payment of a dollar a day in wages for ten-hours' work. For that they faced lynching, murder and long prison terms. Written between the lines of their affidavits are eloquent descriptions of the whole tenant-farming system of the South with its degradation of white and Negro sharecroppers and its special and bloody discriminations against those who happen to be Negroes. Despite the terror, the Sharecroppers' Union is growing and spreading over the Black Belt—there are now 12,000 members. The delegation will go to Washington next week to tell their story to government officials and to protest against the opening of their mail by local postmasters.

—THE EDITORS.

Mrs. Meriwether's Story

STATE OF NEW YORK }
COUNTY OF NEW YORK } SS:

ANNIE MAE MERIWETHER, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

I lived in Lowndes County, near Fort Deposit, all my life. I worked by the day for C. C. Ryles for 40c a day when I could get work. My husband, Jim Press Meriwether, worked for C. C. Ryles. His monthly wage was one bushel of corn meal, two gallons of syrup and $4.00 in money. Jim Press had worked for Ryles off and on for 3 years. He started working for him steady in January. Ryles claimed that Jim owed him $3.00. He made this claim so Jim wouldn't leave him. Jim wanted to quit Ryles last May but he knew that he would be beaten and the Sheriff would bring him back on account of the debt.

I only got one week steady work from Ryles. I worked from sun-up till sun-down. After that I worked about 2 days a week for Mrs. Ryles. She paid me off with something she had around the house. Usually it was a piece of home-cured meat after it had got strong and she wouldn't eat it. She never paid me any money. After she found I wasn't satisfied with the wage I couldn't get any more work.

Jim joined the Sharecroppers' Union about a week after he heard about it. I joined at the next meeting. Jim and I carried in about 15 or 20 members. They elected me Captain of the Women's local.

We discussed the strike and everybody agreed it was the right thing to do. We were all in need of something to eat and some clothes to wear. All the sharecroppers and tenants who were not working for wages agreed to help the wage hands win the strike. We struck for $1.00 a hundred pounds for picking cotton and $1.00 a day for wage work.

The strike started Monday morning on N. J. Bell's plantation but the strike leaflets were not out till Tuesday night. We had heard about the lynch mob whipping the hands on the Bell place so we wanted to get out of the way. We left our house and went about 2 miles away to my sister's house.

Thursday morning Jim Press went back home to get some groceries. On the way back he stopped at his sister's house. As he stepped in the door John Frank Bates of Fort Deposit shot him down. Along with Bates there was a big crowd in the house. C. C. Ryles, Vaughn Ryles, Mack Gingles, Newt Wheeler, Basil Crenshaw, Raymond Davis, Hubert Gregler, Walter Black, Homer Black, Culbert Ryles, Bascomb Gingles and a lot of other landlords. They all had guns and pistols. After shooting my husband down they asked him lots of questions about who were the leaders in the Union. Jim Press wouldn't tell them anything.

About half the mob came on to the house where I was. Vaughn Ryles, Ralph McGuire, Newt Wheeler, Basil Crenshaw, Homer Black, Culbert Ryles, Bascomb Gingles, and about 20 others came. They all had guns and pistols. They came to my sister's home looking for leaflets. They knew they were there because Jim Lassic told them. Jim Lassic is a hand on the Robert Herlang plantation. He went on picking peas, scabbing on the strike. He distributed leaflets on Tuesday night but he went to work on Wednesday. He told the landlord where the leaflets were.

The mob entered the house and someone pointed to me and said, "There's one of the sons of bitches we're looking for." They asked me where Jim Press was. I told them I didn't know, he had left early in the morning.

They started tearing up the place looking for leaflets. They found the leaflets under a mattress. They said, "Here they are. Yes, you're one of the leaders in the meetings around here. You're the one we're looking for. Tell what you know about the meetings. I already know what you know but I want to hear what kind of damned lie you're going to tell." Vaughn Ryles was doing the biggest of the talking. I said I didn't know about the meeting because I had been working. He said, "You might as well tell me all about it because I read a note." I told them I had not been to a meeting. Vaughn Ryles started doubling the rope and told me to pull off all my clothes. He said, "Lay down across the chair, I want naked meat this morning." I lay down across the chair and Ralph McGuire held my head for Ryles to beat me. He beat me about 20 minutes. He was beating me from my hips on down, and he hit me across the head.

They said, "Now see if you can tell us what you know." I said I joined the Union but I didn't go back to any more meetings. They said, "Is that all you know about it?" I said, "Yes sir."

They were all cussing. Ryles said, "If that's all you know, lay back across the chair." I lay back down on the chair and they beat me for about 15 minutes more. They beat me over the same place. They let me up and I still didn't know anything for them.

Then Vaughn Ryles put a loop in the rope and told me to come over and when he put the rope around my neck that I would know. One of them said, "Let's carry her out to a damned limb somewhere." Vaughn said, "No right here in the house will do." Then he threw the rope over the rafters and then he and Ralph McGuire drew me up about 2 feet from the floor. My sister-in-law said they kept me there for 15 or 20 minutes and then let me down. I was unconscious. She said I laid there about 10 minutes and then I got up.

Then Ryles said, "See if you can tell what you know." He said, "If you don't the limb will get you next time." Then I told him I joined the Union but I never did attend. I said, "They elected me Captain but I knew you wouldn't like for it to be here and I wouldn't take any part in it."

Vaughn Ryles said, "If you had said that to start with I would never have beat you." Then he said, "Put on your clothes and go over to your house. Both of you." Then he saw my little girl and said to her, "What in hell do you know about it." But she didn't say anything.

They marched us on ahead of them and said, "We might stop before we get there

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but you all better go on back." So we went on to the house. They had my husband hid. I passed right by where he was but I didn't know he was there. They stopped at my sister's house and got Jim Press. They walked him about a mile and a half and set him out back of a cow barn in the hot sun from about 11:30 till about a half hour before sundown that evening.

When I saw the mob leaving I told my sister-in-law, "I'm not going to stay here. They might kill me, but they will kill me trying to get away from here. I'm going to see where Jim Press is." Then we got out and took to the woods and stayed there until about a half hour before sun-down. Then I heard guns firing about 75 to 100 times. There were a lot of other hands in the woods and when I got to where they were they told me about my husband being shot. They were lynching him then.

I spent Thursday night at a friend's house and Friday morning I heard about my husband being lynched; it was in the papers. I went part of the way back but they all said I had better not go back because they would kill me because I had left the house when Vaughn Ryles had told me not to leave.

Saturday morning I left for Birmingham. I left my little girl with my aunt and then my mother came and got her. She is 7 years old.

Sworn to before me this
12th day of October, 1935
Annie Mae Meriwether
JACK ZURBEL
Notary Public Kings Co. No.50, Reg. No. 6052
Cert. filed in N. Y. Co. No. 134 Reg. No. 6-Z-89
Commission expires March 30. 1936

ANNIE MAE MERIWETHER *Photo by Consuela Kanaga*

Henry Roberts

STATE OF NEW YORK }
COUNTY OF NEW YORK } SS:

HENRY ROBERTS, being duly sworn, deposes and says,

I work on a 200 acre plantation in Lowndes County as a sharecropper. I work on halves. The landlord furnishes half the cotton and corn seed and we pay for the rest. We furnish the seed for our food crop because the landlord doesn't get any of that. I couldn't plant over 5 acres of cotton and only as much corn as I could tend to. We pay for half of the fertilizer we use. We don't get any statement from the landlord on what he sells the crop for. The landlord just tells us so much was spent and we do not see it on paper. The landlord tells us what we have to buy and gives a slip to the storekeeper. I usually get white meat, flour, lard, meal and coffee. I haven't gotten any clothes for 3 years. We avoid, whenever possible, dealing at the farm store because we know we will not get anything at the check-up. Two years ago I got $24 and last year $17 at the check-up. If you owe at the check-up, the landlord takes all your corn, peas and cotton and carries it some place else and locks it up. If we move when we are in debt the landlord gets the Sheriff to carry us back. Sometimes another landlord will take over our debt to another landlord and get us to move on his plantation.

When I could get other work I did. I plowed, hauled and pressed hay, hoed and other things for 50 cents a day. I cut cordwood at 50 cents a cord and cut 3 cords in a week. Altogether I got about 25 days of wage work a year. I have 2 children. One is 10 years old and has only been in school 3 months in his life and my 8-year-old old boy has only been 2 months to school. Free schools run about 2 months or 3 months at the highest.

When I heard about the Sharecroppers' Union I joined the same night. That was in July. I joined because I felt I was working for the right thing. The cotton pickers' strike was called to win higher wages. We would have gotten an axe handle over the head if we had gone one by one to the landlords and asked for $1 a hundred pounds for picking cotton. Very few of us ever asked what we were going to get when we went to work for a landlord and if we argue about the wage they never hire us any more. Everyone in the Union thought it was a fair demand. It would really take more than this to run a large family.

Everyone told the same story about the terror at N. J. Bell's place on Monday, August 19, when the strike started. Hardie Bell came through Hayneville and called the law. Sheriff R. E. Woodruff came. When Willie Witcher started home, Sheriff Woodruff shot at him and hit him a lick on the head with his pistol butt. Then he carried Willie to jail and kept him there 27 days.

The lynch mob put a gun on Simon Lacy and carried him around and made him tell who the Union members were. When he refused to scab they gave him a whipping. I saw the scars on his body. After whipping Union men around Calhoun the lynch mob went to Bell's Simonton place but they didn't find anyone because they were hiding in the swamps.

I went to the woods on Monday. We got word they were coming to get us so we got

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out. About 200 of us were hiding in the swamps. They said they would kill me when they found me so I slipped off to Birmingham.

Sworn to before me this
12th day of October, 1935

His
Henry [X] Roberts
Mark

JACK ZURBEL
Notary Public Kings Co. No. 50, Reg. No. 6052
Cert. filed in N. Y. Co. No. 134 Reg. No. 6-Z-89
Commission expires March 30, 1936

Wesley Smith

STATE OF NEW YORK }
COUNTY OF NEW YORK } SS:

WESLEY SMITH, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

I live in Lowndes County, Alabama, where I have lived all my life. Wage hands in Lowndes County get 40c a day for working from sun to sun, about 13 hours. All landlords stick to the same price. They never give the wage hands any money, only trade orders. The stores charge us high prices: 32c a pound for white meat, $1.10 for a 24 lb. sack of flour, $1.00 a bushel for meal, 24c for lard.

When I first heard about the Sharecroppers' Union I joined that night. All the wage hands and the sharecroppers joined without any persuasion. On Saturday night, August 17, we held a meeting and decided to strike at once because we couldn't go on living at the price we were getting. On Monday morning all of Bell's hands gathered at the store in Calhoun. Hardie Bell came from Montgomery and talked to them. He said that anyone who would not work for the price he offered them would have to move. He called Sheriff R. E. Woodruff who tried to get the hands to go back at the old wage. Willie Witcher, a Union leader, said that we all had agreed not to work and to pull together, which we had. He walked away and the Sheriff called him to come back. When he didn't come, but said he would be back directly, Sheriff Woodruff shot at him 3 times and another deputy shot at him twice, then Sheriff Woodruff hit him across the head with his pistol. I was on my way to the store when I met the people leaving there. I talked to over a hundred people right after it happened and they all told me the same story about it. They advised me not to go down because the landlords said that all the leaders of the Union were going to be killed.

That night a mob of about 35 landlords and deputies carried Henry Gibson, Wilbert Gibson, Henry Gibson, Jr., Kip Graham, Dahl Wright, Simon Lacy and Joe Williams out on the road between Fort Deposit and Calhoun and whipped them. These were all wage hands on Bell's place. In the mob were Will Chrenshaw, Will Lambert, Raymond Davis, Willie Claude Bates and Vaughn Ryals. I saw Henry Gibson the next morning. He had been whipped twice and had big welts all over his body. He couldn't get out of bed. Tuesday the mob went up to Bell's Simonton place to beat up the hands but they had all hid in the swamps. The strike leaflets were put out Tuesday night and the strike spread to all the other plantations.

On Friday night I saw 3 lynch gangs. There were 10 in one gang, 6 in another, and 3 in the other. Will Lambert, Newt Smith and Crampton Bishop were in the last bunch. They threatened to kill me if I didn't get away from there. I left for Birmingham Saturday morning.

I couldn't go to the Sheriff for protection because I was afraid he would shoot me just like he did Willie Witcher. I didn't go to see the Governor because we Negroes don't get our rights anywhere in Alabama and I don't believe the Governor would do anything for us. Montgomery is right near Lowndes County and I believe I would be lynched if I went there to see the Governor.

If we don't get more wages we will have to strike again. We can't live on the wages we have been getting.

Sworn to before me this
12th day of October, 1935

His
Wesley [X] Smith
Mark

JACK ZURBEL
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The A. F. of L. in Session

BILL DUNNE

ATLANTIC CITY

IT HAS been the fashion in certain "intellectual" circles for many years to ridicule the American Federation of Labor and, directly or indirectly, the whole organized labor movement. If on one hand there was a positive contribution from this Menckenian school in the form of factual proof of the reactionary and corrupt character of certain union leaders and their policies, there was also—and this was the main thesis—the belief that the rank and file of the union membership and consequently the American working-class of which it is a cross section, was so backward, so lacking in understanding and initiative, that it had and would continue to be rallied for programs and tactics against its own interests.

In effect this was the classic denial of the ability of working men and women to do anything for themselves. It was in this respect the historical apology for robbery enforced by tyranny—the old theory that the rulers always know better than the ruled what is best for the subject class.

Right here it is necessary to make a fundamental distinction between the character and purpose of Communist criticism and exposure of labor agents of capitalism in the ranks of the labor movement and that of the ivory tower boys who are irked by the crudities of the trade-union movement, who bewail the fact that the membership is so easily beguiled. While they speak sorrowfully about conventions where officialdom, using quirt and spur, is able to ride high, wide and handsome over the membership, at the same time this type of critic hugs joyfully to his breast the greatest of all illusions regarding the class struggle, i.e. that opinions, policies, programs and tactics of millions of exploited workers and to a lesser degree on entrenched officialdom, can remain unchanged in the face of new and decisive economic facts.

Communists know that the exact opposite prevails. Their criticism of union officialdom is designed *to encourage* the development of rank-and-file initiative, to fit policy, program and tactics of the labor movement to new situations.

It is for this reason that Communists find it possible to make a united front with labor officials, whom they have criticised in unmeasured terms, the moment these leaders show that they are responding to an altered situation, however reluctantly, on one ponit or another of the Communist program of immediate demands and changes in tactical line.

The eyes of the whole world are on the fifty-fifth annual convention of the American Federation of Labor in Atlantic City—and rightly so. This is the annual gathering of representatives of the labor unions—the combat organizations of the working class in the most powerful imperialist country in the world. The six-year crisis has had its effect. It is useful here, especially for the purpose of confounding the intellectual apologists and hangers-on of monopoly capitalism whose sneering references to the labor movement under the guise of assistance to it have served to obscure basic issues. To quote Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy*:

> Large-scale production brings together in one place a mass of persons not previously acquainted with one another. Competition severs their interests. The defense of the rate of wages, giving them a joint interest against their employers, plucks them out of isolation, and consolidates them into a group. Animated by a general idea of resistance, they form a union. These unions, isolated to begin with, are themselves forced into combination as a means of defense against their employers, who on their side are steadily consolidating their forces for attack. In time, the defense of the unions comes to seem to the work-

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ers even more important than the defense of their wages. . . . In the struggle [extant form of civil war] there are unified and developed all the elements of the coming general engagement. Having reached this point the combination assumes a political character. (Quoted by Lenin in *Marxism.* Workers Library Publishers.)

The fifty-fifth annual convention of the A.F. of L meets at a time when the world faces the probability of a new world war. It meets at a time when the living standards of the working population of the United States—the richest country in the world—have been forced down to new low levels for this period of advanced industrial technique and mass production.

If one looks honestly for the reason for the change in sentiment in this convention, contrasted with the San Francisco gathering and especially with the N.R.A. convention of 1934 (there are some twenty resolutions for a Labor Party and thirty-two for industrial unionism, there is the practical certainty that the proposed Red-baiting constitutional amendment will, if not actually defeated in the convention, have such a vote from decisive unions polled against it as to render it inoperative and thereby put the prestige of the tory wing of the executive council at somewhere around nil) it is to be found in the latest report of the Federation's "Monthly Survey of Business." Constant readers of NEW MASSES will recall that this writer predicted some two years ago that forcing wages down to the level of farm hands of thirty-five years ago would wreck the New Deal and bring a revolt of the labor movement. ("Moley—Agent-Provocateur of the New Deal," NEW MASSES, June 26, July 3, July 10, 1934). The Federation's survey states:

Because one-third of American wage and salaried workers are still without industrial work and workers' buying power is still below 1929, we cannot expect the present industrial upturn to carry business very far on its road to recovery.

During depression, American living standards have been set back thirty years. The general standard of living in the United States depends on the amount of goods our industries produce for each person. At the bottom of depression, we produced enough to maintain the standard of 1898; since then we have recovered the level of 1905. The far-famed American standard of living meant in 1933, poverty and slow starvation for more than half our people. Yet our industries are equipped to give every one a comfortable living standard.

In our organized effort toward recovery under N.R.A., emphasis was placed at first on re-employment and increasing workers' income. This year there has been no such emphasis. The results accomplished in 1934 contrast strongly with this year's record. . . . In 1934, we kept the economic machine in balance. Hours of work were restricted and increasing production created jobs; employment and workers' income rose in proportion to production, each recording an advance of 4 percent over the previous year.

In 1935 (eight months) production made twice the gain of 1934 (8 percent), but it was not supported by any increase in employment or buying power. A 5.6 percent increase in workers' total income was more than offset by a 5.9 percent increase in living costs. After the end of N.R.A., increasing production lengthened work hours instead of employing more workers; the fall business upturn has not created its full quota jobs for the unemployed.

This fall's business pick-up indicates a revision to the pre-depression type of business expansion, when business men increased production because they saw a chance for good profits, without considering whether a firm foundation of workers' buying power had been built to sustain it. Such expansion, when it greatly exceeds buying power, can only end in collapse, even if the downfall is postponed for several years.

A BOARDWALK PICK-UP — *Russell T. Limbach*

The rumors and the facts about the inner differences in the executive council, the superficial reasons why one union official does this and another does that are all very interesting and sometimes important.

But the main reason why the tory majority of the executive council is going to get a moral and political defeat at this convention on such basic questions as a Labor Party, industrial unionism, inner-union democracy and union autonomy, is that its program and tactics have been proved to be not in the interests of the membership. This will hold true no matter what the *formal* vote may be on these decisive issues.

There is still the illusion that Roosevelt is "the lesser evil." This may save the tory majority of the executive council (it does not represent a majority in terms of decisive unions of workers in basic industries) from a formal defeat on the Labor Party question. But this convention is, in spite of all maneuvers of the dyed-in-the-wool craft unionists and the apostles of the futile and dangerous "non-partisan political policy," a milestone on the later laps on the road to the political independence of the American labor movement.

These conclusions are based on the proceedings of the first week of the fifty-fifth convention. The debates and votes of the second week of the convention will prove their correctness.

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Labor Trouble in Harlem

LOREN MILLER

LAST week's issue of The New York Amsterdam News, one of the country's leading Negro newspapers, carried a rousing editorial condemning discrimination in the American Federation of Labor and warning that "it is high time that Mr. Green's organization become a federation of all labor." While that issue of the paper was being printed and distributed, seventeen members of the editorial staff were on the picket line; they had been locked out for union activity.

Although the lockout is the first instance of such trouble between a Negro employer and Negro employes, the labor difficulties at The Amsterdam News have followed a very well-known pattern. The locked-out employes, who organized a year ago, are members of the American Newspaper Guild. In August they asked the publishers for a contract which did not call for wage increases but which did regulate hours and working conditions.

The publishers countered with tactics that are all too familiar. There was a blunt refusal to negotiate and then a long period of stalling and threats. Last Monday the time-honored economy issue was trotted out and seven members of the Guild were dismissed. One of these discharged was Mrs. Thelma Boozer who had been employed for nine years and who just happened to be comptroller of the Guild unit. The next day employes met to consider what action to take. While they were considering the matter, word reached them that Obie McCollum, managing editor, and Ted Poston, city editor, had been fired—for reasons of economy.

Economy was rapidly becoming an obsession with the publishers. Wednesday they dismissed twelve more employes on the same ground. Hardly had the lockout begun before the sham character of the economy issue was exposed through a disagreement among stockholders. The News is owned by a corporation, all of the stock of which is held by William H. Davis, his wife, Mrs. Sadie Warren Davis, and her daughter, Mrs. Odessa Morse. Mr. Davis was stripped of all power in a recent reorganization and he says quite frankly that union activity caused the dismissals.

Mrs. Davis, who combines with her daughter to control the paper, is a woman of almost boundless caprice. Her capriciousness is well illustrated by an incident that followed the first dismissals. A few minutes after she had given one of the employes a notice of dismissal she returned to the city room.

"I've changed my mind, I'm not going to fire you," she told the astonished employe. Then she glanced around and saw that another employe was reading the discharged girl's notice.

"I've changed my mind again," Mrs. Davis shouted, "I am going to fire you. And," she said turning to the other employe who was reading the notice, "I am going to fire you for reading that letter."

This free and easy method of hiring and firing is not a recent development; two years ago Mrs. Davis fired her managing editor on two-weeks' notice after a long period of service. Such practices as this and the desire to regain vacations which were arbitrarily dispensed with last year led the employes to organize.

The lockout has proved that not only do Negro employers use tested anti-union tricks against their organized employes but that some Negro workers scab on their fellows. Romeo Dougherty, sports editor, and Edgar Rouzeau, both former Guild members, stayed on the job and were joined by P. A. Prattis, Associated Negro Press employe. The three head a skeleton staff with which the publishers hope to continue publication. Of course they don't call it scabbing. Mr. Dougherty talks vaguely of gratitude, Mr. Rouzeau says he has personal reasons and Mr. Prattis expounds a theory about the peculiar relationship between Negro publisher and Negro employe.

Meanwhile the New York Newspaper Guild has rallied its forces to aid The News unit and Harlem is indicating that its sympathies are with the discharged employes. Intellectuals are taking turns on the picket line with unemployed workers. One of the most encouraging features has been the forging of a united front that is as wide and effective as it is informal; Tammany Democrats, Socialists, Republicans, Communists and people who never worry about politics are offering their services at headquarters located at 205 West 135th Street.

The lockout has already attracted nation-wide attention. It is indicative of the ferment that is going on beneath the surface in Negro life and success for the employes will mean the striking of a blow at the use of identity of color between employer and employe to excuse exploitation.

It is too early to predict the length or bitterness of the struggle. A citizens' committee is being formed to aid the employes and churches, clubs, labor organizations and fraternal orders are enlisting in a move to enforce a boycott of advertisers and readers. Harlem is determined to make The Amsterdam News practice in its office the pro-labor policy that it preaches in its news columns.

"Number One Boy"

ALFRED HIRSCH

HE lets his hair hang carelessly over his forehead, talks simply, makes grammatical errors, mentions his "little cotton patch." Yet, some say of Eugene Talmadge, born and raised in Atlanta, graduate of the University of Georgia, that "the Governor of Georgia's only knowledge of farming and farm problems was gained on the farm his wife inherited."

When he speaks to farmers in Georgia he tells them the A.A.A. processing taxes are taking money from them for the Iowa wheat farmers. . . . When he addresses the New York Board of Trade, Inc., he sings another tune: the A.A.A. processing taxes hurt the cotton farmers in Georgia, the wheat farmers in Iowa *and* the manufacturers for whom they raise the price of raw goods.

In Georgia he says: "The issues of the next election campaign are those of Americanism vs. Communism." In New York: "The issues . . . are those of Americanism vs. Communism and frenzied finance." (A man to my left says: "That's right. And we don't need to be afraid of the Communists around Union Square. It's the ones that work with Roosevelt that are making all of the trouble.")

The Governor of Georgia is a religious man. Pity shows in his eyes as he refers to the law that "drove goats and sheep up the mountains and made them jump off of cliffs. . . . He that gambles with God is playin' a losin' game."

He tells the Board of Trade that the four billion eight hundred and eighty million, called for in Roosevelt's recovery program, amounts to "more than $5 a minute ever since the day Christ was born."

He carries his religion further than that, in New York, as the presidents of this and that corporation listen. "Charity, lookin' after the destitute, relief, is not a proper function of government. . . . You can't stay good by goin' to church on Sundays. You've got to live it, help 'til it hurts."

"Those fellows down in Washington will stop the religion in this country, unless you stop them." (Greeted by not too religious applause.)

And so the problem of "22,000,000 on relief, put there by the ploughin' up program, the killing of animals, which threw

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millions out of jobs and gave them to foreigners across the sea," is solved.

He adds: "Is that what the administration calls being a friend of labor? Produce less here and import to make up for it?"

"Friend of labor" sounds strange on this man's lips. When the N.R.A. ordered a meager forty cents an hour for workers on highway construction Talmadge said they wouldn't get it in *his* state. "Most of 'em are niggers anyhow."

The Georgia Federation of Labor passed a resolution stating that he was "seeking to make peons of labor." The Governor shrugged. After all, he's a "farmer" himself. And Georgia's votes are farm votes.

But speaking in New York he slides over that. There are no hayseeds in his listeners' hair, no wisps of straw. Instead he sees a high percentage of pearls stuck in neck-ties . . . and that makes a difference.

Here, without quite using the words, he is a "rugged individualist." He tells of the platform on which he had run for Governor, tells part of it, summarizes and covers up important sections. "We've reduced taxes in Georgia and paid up debts at the same time. We are living up to the Democratic platform of 1932."

He does not mention the uniform license-tag rate of $3 a car which he put over in Georgia because he knows New Yorkers have gotten plates there—at the expense of New York State. Nor does he tell them that he covered this loss in income ($2,500,000), by plastering on another cent on each gallon of gas bought by Georgia motorists. (A Georgia service station attendant told me that.)

He forgets about the other three points of his 1932 gubernatorial platform: a cut on *ad valorem* taxes (which helps the rich), taking the Highway Department away from "the politicians" (he might offend some listener), reduction of utility rates (he would surely offend someone.)

He sounds almost like a Hoover Republican. In fact he says: "The only difference between an old line Democrat and an old line Republican is a postmaster somewhere." (Laughter, loud applause.)

The real trouble started back in 1913, it seems, "when they passed the income tax amendment. And," he says, "we can't share the wealth either. All we can do is share the burden and its up to the government to make that as light as possible."

Then he strays. He's neither Republican, old or new line, nor Democrat. He is a "JEFFERSONIAN Democrat."

"Leave those taxes to the states," he says. "If they need an income tax, let them have it."

After all, we've got nice clean chain gangs for your roads, haven't we? And it really doesn't matter if a few thousand share-croppers starve, does it? And the church will provide, won't it? And we've a fine insurrection law for the Herndons if it doesn't, haven't we? And we can build up concentration camps for strikers in no time, can't we?

"Private industry built this country," he says, returning to the Republicans, "and this N.I.R.A. price fixing and wage fixing that's dead now, like the A.A.A. will be, would have stopped initiative, ambition, the only thing that's made America the greatest country in the world.

"The New Deal isn't a new deal at all. It's old, very old. It's just plain 'deuces wild.'"

The Board of Trade approves . . . particularly on the "religious" question, meaning: they don't like government relief forced on Roosevelt by the unemployed. At this very meeting, the Board had passed a resolution calling for stringent supervision of all relief expenditures.

Georgia's "Number One Boy" as a local newspaper editor calls him, smiles at the enthusiasm.

The question is: Where is he going? And who is going along? Certainly Washington does not want him, whether they are able to erect another N.R.A. or not, whether the A.A.A. is called out or not. This man isn't playing ball, he isn't giving them a chance to find out for themselves where they are going.

And the Republicans? They can't take him and he, four generations of Georgia old, can't step over to them. Talmadge, homely speech and all, will be left by the wayside unless he can sign up with the Liberty League or something like it. And then he will have to forget about states' rights and remember only the Constitution (with no new amendments and a few stricken out) and the individual rights of those who have.

Cells

JAMES KING

It's funny how a thing is in your mind,
and after twenty years comes popping out.
There was a cop, down on the picket line
today, put me in mind of old man Jenks
that used to teach biology in school.
Well, there while I was helping pick up Joe,
after this bastard shot him, and the blood
was making my hands slippery, I remembered
the way my hands would always start to sweat
and get all slippery, when I used to try
to answer old man Jenks, and tell about
his lousy "cells"; the way they'd come together,
and grow; and there you'd have a brand new kid.

Joe didn't last till we could get him home.
The others thought, since we'd been such good friends,
I ought to be the one to tell his wife.
Well, while I waited for her at the door,
trying to figure some nice gentle way
to tell her, "Kid, your children haven't got
a father any more . . ." I couldn't get
those cells out of my mind. I couldn't stop
remembering the way that cop had looked
like old man Jenks in school. All of a sudden, just as I
heard her footsteps, it came to me,
the thing to tell her; how to make her see.
You take a man, with guts, and brains, and muscle:
and all he comes from in those little cells;
coming together; growing, growing, growing.
Well, here's dead Joe, and twenty million dead Joes
just like him, only living. What's the answer?
For them, their wives and kids? It all came to me,
while Joe's wife washed his blood off my clenched fists
with tears. "Struggle" and "Solidarity";
"Union" and "Fight"—they're plenty more than words.
They're living things, that join and come together—
and from that joining, there will *grow* an answer!

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Correspondence

Soviet Trade with Italy

To The New Masses:

I have been puzzled and I must say alarmed. at the news I have read in a number of newspapers and also in Time magazine that the Soviet Union ships oil to Italy for use against Ethiopia. Time put it this way:

> Since July cargoes of Soviet wheat from Sebastopol, coal and tar from Nicolaiev, and oil from Batum have been regularly arriving at Massua and Mogadisthu, Italian war bases in Africa. Much Soviet oil is also being sold to Italy direct, as Communists paradoxically fuel the fascist fleet.

I want very much to hear your explanation. This has not only puzzled me, but many of my friends, who to date have been sympathizers with the Soviet peace policy.

Detroit. Harvey E. Wyatt.

The Soviet Union's attitude has been made clear at Geneva and in the world press: "Peace is indivisible." And observers at Geneva know that the Soviet Union has called upon the League of Nations constantly to exert all the power of its collective authority to prevent war. If the Soviet Union had taken "unilateral" action, if it had broken off its trade relations with Italy, this step unquestionably would have weakened the League, by repudiating the very idea of collective action to which the Soviet Union was committed. It would not, of itself, have prevented other nations from trading with Mussolini. On the contrary, with the program of collective action once discarded, the opposite effect could have been reasonably looked for.

The Soviet Union has thus far brilliantly utilized capitalist contradictions to retain the "indivisibility of peace." It went to Geneva for that purpose. It sought and is seeking every possible way to prevent war. It has been ready to harness imperialist rivalries for that purpose. It has called for and has led in the movement for collective sanctions to halt Mussolini. It will carry out the letter and spirit of the sanctions imposed.

A socialist country striving for peace but surrounded by capitalist nations, with whom it must trade, is bound to run into the contradiction of selling goods to nations straining for war. The U.S.S.R. trades with Germany, which plans to march on Soviet Ukraine; with Japan, which covets eastern Siberia. It has dealt with Italy, which is no different from Hitler Germany or the Mikado's and Mitsubishi's Japan. Editorial writers who interpret Soviet trade with Italy as deliberate support of Mussolini's African program are speaking malicious nonsense and they do so consciously.—The Editors.

On Reviewing Pamphlets

To The New Masses:

There was something jarring to me in the heading "Literature for Use" which appeared in a departmental heading in a recent issue of The New Masses. As though all literature is not literature for use! This feeling deepened when reading further we discovered that eight pamphlets had been thrown at the reviewer for covering in one review.

As far as we could determine there was only one explanation which could account for Marxist works on such varied subjects being lumped together in this fashion: that was the fact that we had here paper-covered pamphlets selling at cheap prices. But then, *What Is To Be Done,* that blue print of Bolshevism written by a certain individual by name Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin, was also produced as a paper-covered pamphlet! In this same issue of The New Masses, a separate heading and a column and a half of space were devoted to a review of Corliss Lamont's "The Illusion of Immortality." The book sells for $3. But, buried under the classification of "literature for use" Earl Browder's "Religion and Communism" receives one paragraph.

Is there not a deep and important question for the working-class movement involved here? In the emphasis placed on the book-review department of The New Masses we have one reason why so few talented writers place their abilities at the service of the revolutionary movement in that field where today talent is badly needed: pamphleteering. Too few of the army of revolutionary writers and aspirants for that title can be found who will devote the same loving care, the same hard labor to turning out a two-cent pamphlet as they will spend on a novel or a poem. Because they have not grasped the *essence* of the truth that great art is great pamphleteering, great pamphleteering is great art.

One example: the Communist Party has announced that it will print and distribute hundreds of thousands, millions of pamphlets in a Soviet America series. Each industry, each class is to be reached with the message of the future, the picture of what a Soviet world would mean to a miner, a machine worker, a textile worker, a doctor, a small business man, an artist. Is not this something that should grip the revolutionary writer? Do not these pamphlets demand more than simply facts, more than simply an attractive cover and readable type? Do they not call for the best that is in the writer: keen understanding, lucidity, imagination, closeness to the masses?

The significance of this fact is vividly illustrated by Bruce Minton, who by the way did on the whole a splendid job when faced with the task of reviewing eight pamphlets at one fell swoop.

He tells the story of a working woman who came across a two-cent pamphlet on fascism. It was poorly printed, unattractive on the outside, but she liked the contents. After reading it, she placed it in an empty milk bottle in the hall. A few days later the milkman was asking her where he could get additional copies, and pamphlets on other subjects. He had passed on the pamphlet, which by now had been patched several times and was falling apart, to his friends on other milk routes. Most of the men wanted more literature.

An art form which results in such service to the proletarian revolution is an art form which must be fostered, studied and mastered. The New Masses ought to promote discussion and devote space approximating the space it has devoted to the novel and poem.

Chicago. Jack Martin.

League for Southern Labor

To The New Masses:

After a year and a half of fruitful activity in promoting the organization of Southern textile workers, the Committee to Support Southern Textile Organization has broadened the scope of its work to include Southern workers in all fields of industry and agriculture. The name of the Committee has been changed to the League for Southern Labor.

The South, as the section of the country where workers are most oppressed, will be one of the chief battlegrounds for their rights in the coming year. In the South, not only the industrialist, but the government itself spies upon trade union organization. Workers are hounded by vigilante bands organized by sheriffs. Militancy is crushed with the blacklist. When the sharecroppers strike for a pitiful $1 a day, they are answered with the murder of ten of their leaders. Despite such oppression and terror, there is a growing sentiment for struggle and for unity of Negro and white. The time is ripe to build a strong, united rank-and-file trade union movement throughout the South.

The League for Southern Labor, through a series of mass meetings, lectures, forums and varied social affairs, expects to be able to maintain an increasing number of rank-and-file organizers throughout the South. In addition to financial support, the League, through its Publicity Committee, will organize a concerted campaign to keep the special situation of the Southern worker in the public eye. We, in the North, are in a position to expose the extreme exploitation of the Southern workers and to make workers and professionals all over the country realize that Southern wage levels affect the lives of all of us. For this purpose, the League will publish a monthly magazine, The South Today, a bulletin of information about the struggles and living conditions of Southern workers. Through its Defense Committee, the League will fight for civil rights in the South and will organize defense campaigns to free workers so frequently framed by the boss-controlled courts.

The activities of the League are growing. A Southern branch was recently formed in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and another is being formed in Chattanooga, Tennessee. More members and more branches are needed. We urge all sympathetic readers to join the League to prevent the ruling class from making of the South an American Naziland. For further information, please write to the League for Southern Labor, 304 West 58th Street, New York City. League for Southern Labor.

Letters in Brief

Walter Ufer writes from Taos, N. M.: "Your art issue is a knockout. . . . I just do not know where to begin and where to end in this compliment to you to have the sense, the feeling, to get out an art number and such a splendid one at a time, a disturbed one, as we are living in now."

Beginning October 15 at 6:30 p. m., Henry Cowell will begin a course on melodic construction at the Downtown Music School. The course is design "to show systematically, in such a fashion that the student without previous musical experience may apply the knowledge."

From Westport, Ore., E. S. Hall writes to urge The New Masses to carry a full article on the Northwest lumber strike of this summer. And from Aberdeen Wash., a dealer tells us that the excerpts from Clara Weatherwax's novel *Marching! Marching!* which appeared in the art number of The New Masses "created such a sensation here that we ran short."

From the South, a reader writes, "Let us cry out against the outrages of Nazi Germany and let us carry the truth about these lynchings into every state and nation with every means at our command. The South does not need lies, it needs a Proust, a Barbusse, a Zola and a Lenin."

Isaac Horwitz commends Richard Wright's article "Joe Louis Uncovers Dynamite," though another reader finds it does harm to the Negro people. And another correspondent agrees with Michael Blankfort that Robert Forsythe's "A World Gone Mad" should be issued as a penny pamphlet and offers to contribute a dollar to any organization that will reprint it. Besides, this reader would like to see Walter Wilson's "Capital's Fight for a Draft Law" reprinted and given a wide circulation.

New Theater Magazine invites the general public to attend a dinner to be held October 23, 7:30 p. m., at the Hotel Edison, New York City. Speakers will include Martha Graham, John Haynes Holmes, Archibald MacLeish, Clifford Odets and others.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Socialist Realism

"WE MUST dare, Comrades." It was with these words that Nikolai Bukharin closed his memorable report on poetry in the U.S.S.R. at the Congress of Soviet Writers a year ago—a report which, by virtue of its analytical power, catholicity of view, depth of insight into the nature of the poetic process and profound erudition must long remain one of the outstanding critical achievements of our time.

"We must dare, Comrades." But it was precisely this quality, this willingness to dare that characterized not only Bukharin's report, not only Karl Radek's eagle's-eye survey of contemporary world literature, not only Maxim Gorky's enormously provocative generalizations on the history of culture—but the Congress as a whole. Was it not a daring, an unheard-of thing for the writers of a given country—not the writers of this school or that, but all the significant writers of all schools—to get together for the purpose of hammering out a new philosophy of literature, a new plan of procedure that should be commensurate with the new society in which they live and work? Was it not a thing unknown in the annals of letters that out of such a congress should come more than slogans and resolutions—important as these may be, a well-rounded, crystal-clear thesis, a thesis dynamic enough to inspire a nation's writers, broad enough and at the same time definite enough to open their eyes to the vast horizons within their reach, and above all actually to point out the road to those horizons?

I waive the matter of workers and farmers pointing out to writers their shortcomings as artists, of factory and collective farm representatives attending so august a gathering as a congress of writers, of newspapers devoting more space to an authors' convention than the bourgeois press gives to a championship prizefight or a genteel murder, of the prodigious nation-wide ferment over culture—all those things which must still arouse the skepticism of the writer under capitalism, inured as he is to isolation, the indifference of "the public," the lack of faith in his own ultimate significance. But where is the man of letters who can read these key reports of the Soviet Writers' Congress without undue bigotry or ignorance and not be roused by the sense of something new in the world of literature?

You would think a group of authors who could swing anything as impressive as such a congress, who could command the attention and respect of an entire people and of their government, whose books sell in astronomical figures—you would think that a gathering of such authors might pardonably indulge in a little bragging. You find instead a self-criticism that is almost unknown among us, a drastic examination of their own failings, an ultimatum against "provincialism" and a demand that their work be judged by nothing less than world standards.

"Self-criticism is necessary, Comrades," says Gorky, inveighing against "leaderism" and "philistinism." "We are working before the eyes of the proletariat which, as it grows more and more literate, is constantly raising its demands on our art, and, incidentally, on our social behavior.[1]

"Communism of ideas does not coincide with the nature of our actions and the mutual relations existing among us—relations in which a very grave part is played by philistine mentality, finding vent in envy, trivial gossip and mutual disparagement."

"The day is over," declares Bukharin, "when we could say: 'A poor thing but mine own.' We must apply world scales of measurement." And flatly denying such loose assertions as the one, for instance, that the lyric poet Svetlov is the equal of Heine, Bukharin admits that Svetlov is "a good romantic poet who can achieve much if he will work," and then goes on to say: "I have heard that many comrades, including Comrade Svetlov, are not—to put it mildly—particularly well satisfied with such restrained appreciation. But I must say that in my opinion the standards we customarily apply have already become out of date. I consider that Svetlov is one of our very best Soviet poets, but it must be argued that now, in the period of reconstruction, when we are triumphantly carrying out the Second Five Year Plan and setting ourselves tasks of gigantic scope, it is no good at all trying to measure poetry by the standards employed, let us say, somewhere in the provinces of our country, or by those in use among apothecaries." Compared with the extraordinary erudition displayed by the young Pushkin, Bukharin declares again, "ours could be put under a three-penny bit! We must put a stop to this."

The weight of self-criticism, however, can be measured only in terms of the ultimate objective. Only when we realize the goal that the Soviet writers have set themselves can we understand the real significance of their self-criticism. And it is fascinating to see how from the positive thesis of socialist realism are derived those standards for measuring an heroic literature of the new Socialist epoch.

I remember when first reading the abbreviated report of Karl Radek's address on contemporary world literature, resenting his attack on James Joyce as the antithesis of socialist realism. I must admit, however, that a closer examination of Radek's speech, and especially his answer to the discussion which followed, reveals a cogency of argument that is pretty hard to refute. "His [Joyce's] basic feature is the conviction that there is nothing big in life—no big events, no big people, no big ideas. . . . A heap of dung, crawling with worms, photographed by a cinema apparatus through a microscope—such is Joyce's work."

Well, you may say this is the political man speaking, the new Soviet puritan, who cannot appreciate a work of art for its own sake. "But," Radek goes on to say,

> It is sufficient to consider the picture that he gives in order to see that it does not fit even those trivial heroes in that trivial life which he depicts. The scene of his book is laid in Ireland in 1916. The petty bourgeois whom he describes are Irish types, though laying claim to universal human significance. But these Blooms and Daedaluses, whom the author relentlessly pursues into the lavatory, the brothel and the pothouse, did not cease to be petty bourgeois when they took part in the Irish insurrection of 1916. The petty bourgeois is a profoundly contradictory phenomenon, and in order to give a portrayal of the petty bourgeois, one must present him in all his relations to life.
>
> Joyce, who is alleged to give an impartial presentation of the petty bourgeois, who is alleged to follow every movement of his hero, is not simply a register of life; he has selected a piece of life and depicted that. His choice is determined by the fact that for him the whole world lies between a cupboardful of medieval books, a brothel and a pothouse. For him, the national revolutionary movement of the Irish petty bourgeoisie does not exist; and consequently the picture he presents, despite its ostensible impartiality, is untrue. . . . If Joyce did not turn his eyes towards the Irish uprising that was preparing, this was not because it took ten years to come, but because all that appealed to Joyce was the medieval, the mystical, the reactionary in the petty bourgeoisie—lust, aberrations—everything capable of impelling the petty bourgeoisie to join the side of revolution was alien to him.

I quote Radek at this length on Joyce because the standards by which he is measuring the Irish genius spring directly from the concept of socialist realism, which demands that the author realize all the contradictions, the contrarieties and the complexities of the world in crisis; which demands that the artist not only see things as they are—statically, but where they are going—dynamically; and which demands not only that the author see where things are going, but himself take a conscious part in leading the reader through the maze of his-

[1] *Problems of Soviet Literature.* International Publishers. $1.50.

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tory toward Socialism and the classless society.

What purely esthetic standards, for instance, can give us so succinct a criticism of the work of John Dos Passos as the following brief paragraph of Radek's?

> Dos Passos' form is his weakness—a weakness not only of a formal character. What is the source of this weakness? The young American intellectual went to the war. There he became a revolutionary; he began to hate war. He saw the spectacle of ruin, but he lacked an integral view of life. For this reason he writes the biographies of his heroes one after the other, so that these biographies may compose a general picture. But he feels that these biographies are taking place against the background of history and he cannot present this background of history, for he cannot generalize. He therefore puts in insertions and excerpts from newspapers in order to glue together that background which *his inability to generalize prevents him from* portraying.

Socialist realism demands the ability to generalize, to "seek out the main phenomenon in the totality of phenomena."

As Bukharin points out, just as the positivism of August Comte had its counterpart in the naturalism of Emile Zola, just as Russian symbolism had its philosophical base in "a peculiar mystic idealism, a cross between Kant and Vladimir Solovyev," so the basis of socialist realism is dialectical materialism, "the translation of the latter into terms of art."

Finally, socialist realism does away with the split between realism and romanticism; it "dares to dream and should do so, basing itself on real trends of development."

> If socialist realism is distinguished by its active, operative character; if it does not give just a dry photograph of a process; if it raises the heroic principle to the throne of history—then revolutionary romanticism is a component part of it. . . . Socialist realism does not merely register what exists, but, catching up the thread of development in the present, it leads it into the future, and leads it actively. Hence, an antithesis between romanticism and socialist realism is devoid of all meaning. (Bukharin.)

For years we have been bewailing the plight of the artist in a world in chaos, the impossibility of creating an heroic, an integrated literature in a world that lacks a sustaining body of ideas, an unbroken circuit of thought and action, a community of interest between writer and audience, a common faith and purpose shared by the overwhelming majority. In the Soviet Union, for the first time in the period of our lives, we have the spectacle of an integrated society releasing the creative energies of its people. The Soviet Writers' Congress was a harbinger of what we may expect in the way of a new and mighty literature from such a society.

EDWIN SEAVER.

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Empire of Death

THE DU PONT DYNASTY, by John K. Winkler. Reynal & Hitchcock, New York. $3.

THE Du Ponts abhor bloodshed. Piously Lammont du Pont told the Senate munitions committee that they love peace. Irenée du Pont wrote a pamphlet to express his pacifistic sentiments and his brothers subscribed heartily to the document. But—

The vast Du Pont explosives and chemicals plants are the keystone of the War Department's industrial mobilization plans.

Their empire of death-by-dynamite-and-gas was built on profits from every American war since 1812.

Their secret formulae of death were withheld from the United States government during the World War, although their latest war devices are for sale to any potential enemy—for a price.

They have divided the world into three provinces with Imperial Chemicals, Ltd. of England and Dynamit A.G. of Germany. These three members of the international gas and explosives trust exchange secrets, apportion markets, share in sales-promotion campaigns for preparedness and mass murder.

Nevertheless the Du Ponts are undoubtedly patriots. On their own testimony, they saved the United States from becoming a "German colony" during the World War. Today they sell their latest engines of destruction to Hitler.

Like old Judge Mellon, Andy's father, they discreetly limit their patriotism to profit-taking. Of the vast Du Pont clan which now sprawls in country estates across the northern part of Delaware, but one saw fit to don a uniform in the World War and his father tried to disown him!

The story of these plutocrats—a "family which today controls a greater slice of American wealth than has ever before fallen into private hands," is the subject of John K. Winkler's latest biography. Unlike the Morgans, Mellons and Rockefellers who, Winkler contends, are now receding in importance, the Du Ponts are steadily increasing their hold on American economic life.

Fabulously enriched by the loot of the World War, these Delaware feudalists "now hold absolute sway" over General Motors in addition to control of those twentieth century marvels—rayon, cellophane, fabrikoid, pyralin, tetraethyl lead, shatterproof glass, artificial rubber and the thousand and one by-products of chemical research.

The peace-loving Du Ponts expanded their powder manufacturing facilities during the war from 8,000,000 to nearly 500,000,000 pounds a year. They produced in those bloody times, 1,466,000,000 pounds of military explosives—smokeless powder, T.N.T., guncotton, dynamite and the like. They supplied 40 percent of the explosives used by the Allies. Net profits, after bookkeeping legerdemain, were $237,000,000. War-time dividends amounted to 458 percent of the par value of their stock. With $49,000,000 in spare cash when the war was over they bought control of General Motors, which in fifteen years has yielded them $250,000,000 more in profits.

This empire was built by methods dear to monopolists. In defiance of the Sherman anti-trust law, the Du Ponts organized the Gunpowder Trade Association, fixed prices, allocated markets and crushed refractory competitors. The government thereupon entered suit to dissolve the powder monopoly—a proceeding described by Winkler as "one

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of the outstanding farces of American judicial history." The court held that the powder magnates had indeed achieved monopoly illegally, but added that the "impossibility of restoring original conditions in the explosive trade narrows the field of operation of any decree we may make." They were thereupon advised to submit a plan for their own dissolution!

How much perspicacity does it take to be a merchant prince of death? Not too much. To be sure, the American explosives kings could drive a sharp bargain with the British and French governments during the war. Take our powder—at $1 a pound—or leave it. But ponder the words of Pierre S. du Pont, head of the family, who wrote Jan. 9, 1915: "Considering the vast and enormous resources of the Russian Empire, it would seem that their bonds are the safest of all the warring nations." So the Du Ponts bargained to sell explosives to the Czar, taking 60-percent payment in bonds. It must be added, however, that Pierre explained in the same letter that "as the cash payment [of 40 percent] will let us out with some profit, it seems unlikely that the net result will be anything but very satisfactory."

In the process of making the world safe for democracy, Winkler relates, 347 Du Pont workers gave their lives in ghastly explosions. There is no estimate, he adds, of the wounded and the maimed for life. At Penns Grove, N. J., in ordinary peace times, the workers in the picric-acid plants are called "canaries" because their skin turns yellow.

A minor triumph of the powder family is ethyl gasoline, a deadly poison, for which they supply the tetraethyl lead. Men went crazy from handling this "loony gas," and hundreds of thousands of workers in Du Pont plants, in refineries and at filling stations continue to be subjected to this serious occupational hazard. How could it be otherwise when it means $3,500,000 profits a year for the Du Ponts? The "tet" plant is located at Deepwater Point, N. J. What tragedies have occurred there are shrouded from public view for "Deepwater is a gloomy citadel of silence, where visitors are discouraged, censorship more tightly drawn and processes even more jealously guarded than at other focal points of Du Pont activity."

Profits must continue, even in the depth of the crisis in 1932, so the explosives boyars "cut the payroll brutally, firing 7,000 enlisted men, a good many officers and hundreds upon hundreds of chemists and engineers." Profits for the year were $26,000,000 and "dividends were paid as regularly as clockwork." Under the Blue Eagle, company unions known as "works councils" were ushered into the plants.

A family which fattens on war and its preparations would naturally, in this era of capitalist decadence, be suspected of flirting with fascism to keep their desperate system intact. Such is exactly the case with the Du Ponts. Their man Friday, Raskob, in the spring of 1934 wrote to the Du Pont's political manag · "urging the formation of an organization to combat the radical elements in the nation. People, he said, should be encouraged to work and get rich and Communistic fallacies exposed."

From this Du Pont incubator was hatched the American Liberty League, focus of the forces of black reaction. A dozen members of the family, says Winkler, have contributed to its war chest. Irenée du Pont, one of the three ruling brothers of the tribe, "has taken to hobnobbing with W. R. Hearst in California and has enthusiastically joined Hearst's violent anti-Red crusade."

United Press reports that powerful financial interests were dickering with the late Huey Long on the basis of a $5,000,000 subsidy. It would be interesting to know just how much the Du Ponts had pledged to this gigantic slush-fund, American counterpart of the millions given Hitler by Thyssen and his fellow war-mongers.

Such are the Du Ponts, breeders in America of war and fascism. Winkler has told the story of this dynasty in brilliant journalistic style. If he leaves it to his reader to ferret out the implications of Du Pontism, that can be charged to the elaborate technique which has been developed by American writers to remain "objective," to avoid the charge of "propaganda" against a sickening system which spells poverty, war and naked dictatorship to 125,000,000 Americans.

HARVEY O'CONNOR.

What Bosses Are Like

CHANCE HAS A WHIP, by Raymond Holden. Scribner's. $2.50.

IN this novel about "labor trouble" in a Buffalo steel mill, Mr. Holden wins his reader by the downright honesty of his own character. Although possessed of a good income and as familiar with the Claridge as most of us are with the Automat, he is too virile to be interested in Society; and his Presbyterian background seems to have given him a determination never to be victimized by illusion. The result is a novel from which workers who are gifted with patience can get an accurate picture of the various ways in which the hierarchy of their employers thinks and feels.

The hero of the novel is a young American of good breeding, like Mr. Holden, who rapidly advances from management of the mill to its ownership. His spectacular rise is made plausible through marriage with the owner's daughter. And a great deal of the attention of the novel is directed towards this passionate love affair, which is made difficult by the existence of an estranged wife. In this part of the plot Mr. Holden is still warring against the outdated bogies of puritan morality with an abundance of amateurishly-handled detail. He is more convincing when he limits himself to the concerns of business, which he sees quite naturally from the top, but with a gift for vivid characterization not unrelated to his growing impatience with this point of vantage. The old president of the mill is a timid conservative who has lost the knack of making money. The lawyer for the firm is ruthlessly concerned with profits. The foremen respond to the pressure with callous singleness of purpose. But Hendrick, who acts as a kind of efficiency expert, sees the picture as a whole, not ideologically to be sure, but as a complex of human relationships. He has begun to make the mill pay when strikes interfere. Instead of fighting

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the strikers, he comes vaguely to realize that something is wrong with the entire system. He offers co-operative ownership and management to the strikers, but their leader rejects it as impractical. And he himself dies accidentally of a racketeer's bullet before he has been able to clarify his position.

Meanwhile Hendricks has been considerably impressed by this union organizer, Gilligan. When Gilligan brutally demolishes his palliative compromise by telling him the only solution is for the workers to control the system, it is the dominance of the man's character rather than the force of his logic that wins him. The curious reader will wonder why this well-placed young man should have been impressed by either. And if Holden had been able to answer the question, his novel would have been as good in form as it is in characterization. The best scene of the book is not adequately prepared for. When the strikers attempt to stop the car in which the old owner is riding towards the mill, at their first move, police and special guards shoot into them like hysterical barbarians without awaiting any word of command. Hendricks has been educated to believe that we live in a democracy in which the police and the courts are impartial arbiters between groups of citizens. When this illusion is shattered, he recoils in rage and disgust. But this is not a typical reaction for one in his position. The ordinary attitude would be (as we observe so beautifully illustrated in the present strike at Consumers' Research) for the liberal owner to look upon his own strike as a justifiable exception to the general rule. If Holden wished to make Hendricks react otherwise, he should have paved the way in his previous treatment of the character. As it is, the reader must find the explanation for this humanitarian reaction in Holden's spontaneous admiration for Gilligan as a man. He admires in Gilligan a straight-forwardness and virility similar to his own, and he half realizes that the union leader finds himself in a more strategic position in which to act without compromise and uncertainty, in other words, with social efficiency. If the relationship between Gilligan and Hendricks had formed the backbone of the book, instead of the love affair, the unnecessary detail which keeps the reader always on the edge of boredom might have disappeared, and what is undoubtedly in its present form a fictionalized biography might have been completely translated into a novel.

EDWIN BERRY BURGUM.

Educating the Middle Class

THE COMING STRUGGLE FOR POWER, by John Strachey. Modern Library. $1.

ALTHOUGH Strachey's book is, I hope, familiar to all readers of THE NEW MASSES, it may not be amiss to make some general comment on the book and on Strachey's position in the revolutionary movement, as well as to discuss the material that has been added since the first edition. *The Coming Struggle for Power,* though it was published only a little more than two years ago, is already, as its appearance in the Modern Library indicates, something of a classic and its author, thanks partly to the actions of the United States government, is a very conspicuous figure. Both deserve our attention.

First of all, then, there is a special introduction in which Strachey discusses the question of force and violence raised by his arrest last March. The discussion is conducted with such logic and good sense that it would be worth buying the book just to read it. Strachey makes three points. First, this is actually a world of violence: "Whatever the Communists are preaching, other people are here and now practicing a constant use of violent methods for attaining their ends." Second, to predict that the transfer of power will take place through the use of force is not the same thing as advocating force. Third, this prediction rests on a recognition of the fact that capitalists do not hesitate to destroy democratic institutions to preserve their power and therefore, "for the workers to pledge themselves in no circumstances to use force in the struggle to abolish this system would make the abolition of capitalism forever impossible."

There is also included in this volume the note that Strachey wrote in April, 1934, for the second edition of the book. One year after the inauguration of the New Deal, he predicted that either it would lead at once to inflation or, if that was temporarily avoided, would result in an increase of the profits of the great corporations without diminishing mass unemployment. Its collapse, he stated, would be followed by an intensification of reaction. Since its prophecies have been fulfilled, the note is now chiefly interesting as an exhibition of Marxist logic. As such, it would make valuable reading for those who blame Mr. Roosevelt or think that any other policy he could have adopted, under capitalism, would have been more successful.

Between these two notes lies the book itself. Its sale has been one of the noteworthy literary phenomena of recent years. No book that makes so many demands on its readers has had a comparable circulation. Quite apart from its Communism, which automatically deprived it of the ballyhoo by which best-sellers are ordinarily launched, its sheer solidity ought to have frightened away a public that regards the works of Stuart Chase, Walter B. Pitkin, Will Durant and Ernest Dimnet as heavy reading. And yet there it was, week after week, in the best-seller columns and this is its third edition.

Part of the explanation is, obviously, the fact that Strachey had something to say and a large section of the middle class, to which he was primarily addressing himself, has been educated by the depression so that it is beginning to recognize the difference between intelligence and nonsense. But a good deal, after all, has to be attributed to the way Strachey said it. I refer not to the lucidity of his exposition or the brilliance of his phraseology, though these are important, but to his whole method of writing the book. "Many of these pages," he wrote in his original preface, "contain evidence of the road along which I have traveled. Indeed, the reader will see at once that the argument of this book follows the course of its author's transition from old views to new." It is, in other words, the story of how a very alert middle-class mind arrived at Communism and middle-class Americans have read it, some with the joy of self-discovery and others with fear and trembling.

The depression forced Strachey to explore the origin and nature of capitalism. He discovered that capitalist economists, whether orthodox or heretical, made assumptions that he could not accept and failed to answer questions that he knew to be urgent. Only Marxian economics, so scorned by the academicians, provided a convincing analysis. This analysis led Strachey to the conviction that capitalism was doomed and his opinion was strengthened by a survey of capitalist culture. Religion, science and literature, as he carefully showed in his book, all pointed to the decay of the system. And on the con-

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tinent, especially in Italy and Germany, he saw the form that capitalism took in its final stages, fascism. His own experience in Labor Party politics showed him that the social democratic method of attacking capitalism, fascism, imperialism and war was futile. There was no alternative but Communism.

The greatness of *The Coming Struggle for Power* lies in the knowledge, eloquence and logic with which it sets forth the case against capitalism and for Communism. The significance of John Strachey—and he is a significant figure in the English-speaking world today—lies in his readiness to accept his own conclusions. Of course he has many assets: his erudition, his candor, his wit and, at least in America, his name, his manner and his accent. But the important thing is that he has placed all his talents at the service of the revolution. The movement has been cursed by intellectuals of a certain sort, such as Hook and Eastman in this country, who wouldn't play if they couldn't be generals and like J. Middleton Murry in England, who insisted on bringing with him into the revolutionary camp all the rubbish that twenty years of slovenly thinking had accumulated. Strachey has never sought eminence as political leader or as theoretician, has never exaggerated the importance of what he was doing, has never tried to impose his views upon other Communists. He has accepted his role as interpreter, as apostle to the middle class. He is doing a superb job.

The three books that Strachey has written since *The Coming Struggle for Power,* elaborate portions of that work. *The Menace of Fascism,* though it has been in large measure superseded, as Strachey realizes, by Dutt's *Fascism and Social Revolution,* was the first clear presentation to the general public of the Marxist analysis of Hitler's rise to power. *Literature and Dialectical Materialism* applies to American authors the methods employed in the dissection of Shaw, Wells, Huxley and Lawrence. *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis* is much the most important of the three, for it shows the further education of the author in Marxian economics and offers an admirable introduction to the study of *Capital.* All three of these books not only enlarge upon and clarify the arguments of *The Coming Struggle for Power* but completely confirm its conclusions.

There is one other section of the book that I wish Strachey would elaborate, the last section, that devoted to the nature of Communism and the outlook for the future. Although the Communist objection to purely utopian speculation is unquestionably wise, there is much that might legitimately be said about life under Communism and to say it would bring conviction to wavering sections of the middle class. When Strachey was here last spring, he was thinking of doing precisely this, of showing what Communism would mean to England and America. I hope he is going to do it, for there is no one better fitted for the task.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Tiny and Graceful

PLAYTHINGS OF TIME, by Arnold Zweig. The Viking Press. $2.50.

THE playthings of time are small people in Germany and Austria, confused, good-hearted, isolated individuals of a "doomed generation which had been hounded to destruction by fiendishly brutal times." What happens to them to doom them or save them are little things, a speck before the eye, two drops of blood on the thumb, the bite of a louse, the courtesy of a ticket seller, things as unimportant in the general scheme as the individuals themselves. Zweig makes the point again and again that let alone these shopkeepers and peasant boys are decent, brotherly and tolerant, entirely opposite in nature to the fearful historical movements of which, as masses of men, they are helpless instruments.

Because the characters are so feeble and so limited in consciousness, the immensity of the seas of war or inflation or fascism which toss them about merely gives an added fillip to the irony of their little fates. But it gives us no deeper sense of war or fascism. One looks for a full awareness of contemporary suffering and barbarity but finds, instead, graceful narrative that might well appear in one of our women's magazines. The story that prevails is the expression of a complete and fanciful individualism.

In *A Silesian Tale,* for instance, a little boy whose mother can keep the two of them alive only through the most bitter self-denial and overwork, goes off to seek aid from the mountain troll. He is given a lift by a rich young couple holding back from marriage because the man is a Jew. A series of happy accidents brings this pair to the aid of the little family and also makes them decide to marry. Or in *Otto Temke's Good Luck,* the temporary rage produced in a car conductor by the sight of a general in uniform saved him, by a fortunate combination of circumstances, from service at the front. It is impossible to take delight in these individual, quite unrepresentative escapes and at the same time, at least as these stories are written, feel fully the tragedy and group struggle of masses still enslaved. Similar conflicts, less direct, appear in most of the other tales. They all represent too obvious a compromise.

OBED BROOKS.

Another Professor Joke

LITERATURE AND SOCIETY, by Albert Guerard. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., Boston. 451 pp. $3.

THE customary procedure in reviewing a book on so massive a subject as *Literature and Society* is to find out what the author's point of view, philosophy, theory or system is. After a diligent reading of the present book, however, what Professor Guerard thinks about the matter still seems to be a puzzle. I offer the following excerpts:

P. 30. "The indifference of the practical man to aesthetic values . . . is a needless self-inflicted mutilation. But the aloofness of the mere bookman—author, critic, scholar—in his Ivory Tower is even more deadly to the soul."

P. 59. "But as soon as his bodily wants are satisfied, man is released from immediate necessity. Forgetting for a while appetite and toil, he faces those problems which are beyond any economic regime—the whence and the whither, Nature and the beyond, love and death."

Apparently the professor stepped out of his room in the Ivory Tower only to climb to an upper floor.

P. 78. "Even in America, the war years and the post-war hysteria revealed a great deal of the Inquisitorial spirit which fortunately melted away when 'normalcy' was restored."

But on page 244 he does his best to keep it from melting with: "If a scholar is out of sympathy with the society he should adorn, and expresses his heretical views, he is guilty of a breach of taste, and very properly snubbed or expelled. But even the scholar who, without attacking the existing order, ignores it, refuses to serve it, is first of all and uncompromisingly a scholar, stands condemned."

P. 95. "It can hardly be denied that the effect of slavery on the negro mind was detrimental: it is highly to the credit of the race that the prolonged ordeal did not wholly destroy its spirit."

P. 81. "Perhaps the most favorable conditions (for literature) are found in the Oppressive State that fails to oppress. . . . Opposition to despotism creates in us a sense of daring, adventure, heroism."

About how much oppression would be O.K., professor?

Being an absent-minded professor is good tactics in troubled times.

SIMON WELLS.

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The Theater

"New Theater Night"

WHEN a future historian writes up the 1935-1936 theater season he will surely describe the night of October 12 when New Theater magazine gave the first of its series of "Nights." He will tell how ebullient hordes nearly pushed through the walls of the Civic Repertory Theater in their frenzy to assist at the proceedings. And if he loves truth he will report the program itself as the most curious hodge-podge of excellent entertainment and sheer exasperation in the annals of the decade.

To Harold J. Rome and Arthur Arent must go the credit for a handful of delicious ideas, executed often with competence and always with enthusiasm. Rome has Gilbert-and-Sullivanized a college *Graduation Day* in a sketch of bright rimes and pitter-patter music. Arent takes the audience behind the scenes of a Peace Conference for an amusing few minutes of imperialist contradictions. The sketch is somewhat lacking in surprises by being on the whole too pat, but Rome and Arent fuse their talents in what this reviewer takes to be the first political torch-song, *Room for One,* in which a young Italian mother tearfully—and subjectively—complains of Mussolini's child-bearing derbies. If some people found the rimes much too spicily seasoned, the thunderous aplause of the house was hardly a plea for blandness. Remembering the Theater Guild's late "revolutionary revue" *Parade,* it was pleasant to think of how much Rome and Arent could have contributed. Certainly these two writers must collaborate in the next left-wing variety show.

An excellent contribution to the program was made by Will Ghere, the director of the Hollywood social theater, whose experience in the hands of Hollywood Nazis we reported in May in connection with *'Till The Day I Die.* Ghere gave a piercing performance in *Snickering Horses* by Emjo Basshe. It is hard to think of a sharper piece of anti-war dramatic writing in the left-wing repertoire, or of one more difficult to produce. It seems to us that the New Theater League could do nothing better at this moment than to broadcast this play (perhaps in adapted form) to its hundreds of member groups for immediate performance all over the country.

And the same suggestion may be made about *For People Who Think,* Jack Shapiro's one-act play, produced first by the Theater Collective a fortnight ago. Set in the art department of a powerful gutter newspaper, it demonstrates far more about the Hearstian anti-Soviet campaign than a dozen pages of invective. It is still much too long and the actors haven't nearly struck their pace, but it is too useful to be limited to one group of actors; it belongs to all of the new theaters.

If it can be said that the songs and sketches were toothsome entertainment it can also be said that the dances were colossal bores. *Lynch* (John Scott and his group) was as pat and tiresome a composition as we have seen in years; and as for the numerous items by Bill Matons and his group, we throw up our hands in amazement. This reviewer kept his eyes strictly on the stage but for the life of him he cannot say how many compositions were given or what they were about. According to the program one of the numbers was *Promised Land* but if it referred to the gyrating couples then the ideology was far more Arabian than Marxian. As for the other episodes that bore some kind of kinship it must be that the choreographer had decided to dance the Communist Manifesto—and to give it as chaotic a representation as he knew how.

In justice it should be stated that New Theater Night producers work under great financial handicaps which make it impossible to rehearse numbers in advance. But New Theater magazine has a deep responsibility to its audience—as patient, responsive and loyal a following as exists anywhere. They are surely entitled to far better management both in the box office and in the production. If the New Dance League had been asked to pass on the proposed dance numbers the program might have been shorter but it certainly would have been saved from three minor calamities. And if the New Theater League had acted in a similar capacity it would have thrown out the rather pointless *John One Hundred* and polished up the production in the many places where it was badly needed.

New Theater Nights are important events. In the past they have brought forth some of the finest things in the entire left-wing theater, among them *Waiting for Lefty.* They have a high record and they must maintain it with all the vigor, strength and art of the brilliant movement of which they are a guide.

STANLEY BURNSHAW.

"The Reapers"

IN *The Reapers* (by Siskind Liev, *Artef Theater*) Artef continues its tradition of unexcelled craftsmanship. These Jewish proletarian artists have chosen a play describing the unceasing class strife in the countryside. And anyone, despite his lack of Yiddish, can get it. The acting is of such magnificent quality (so much pantomime flavors Artef's technique), the mood of the playwright so infectious, the logic of the denouement so clear, that even the Swedish farmhand from North Dakota could understand the Artef peasant voicing his miseries in Yiddish.

It is not a new story, this tale of age-old oppression of the men who reap and sow, but in Artef's hands it takes on a special significance. These Jewish proletarian artists, all products of a crowded, mass-minded metropolis, are as distant from the soil as Second Avenue and Fourteenth Street is from Lincoln, Nebraska. Yet they have so felt the flavor of the countryside, they have so embodied it into *The Reaper* that you could all but smell the hay in the fields. Not long ago I lived with the Pennsylvania Dutch farmers of Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Though the Artef peasant is nearer to the Southern sharecropper type, I saw plenty of farm-hands in Pennsylvania like Artef's "peasant in torn-lamb coat"—men who grow the things to eat and yet are always on the ragged side of hunger. The country seems to do the same thing to the laborer of the soil—whether it be in Bucks County on the Delaware or in the Ukraine near the Vistula. He is shaped by the

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seasons, by the plow and the agrarian property-relationships and he acquires a universal characteristic, despite his nationality. And this truth Artef caught admirably and fixed in their play.

The scene is laid in that part of the Ukraine which fell to Poland of the *pans,* although Soviet Russia is just beyond the horizon. The imperialistic technique of divide and rule is well understood on all continents. Polish laborers were transported to the Ukraine to compete with the native farm-hands. The Ukrainians, already reduced to starvation levels, are stunned by the news. But they rally under the guidance of a Bolshevik son of one of the peasants, join forces with the Polish immigrants and challenge the latest offensive of the Pan.

As this play ends the fields are afire and off from behind the barns one sees the procession of uplifted scythes and pitchforks symbolic of peasant rebellions.

The direction is excellent, the production is the equal of anything in our proletarian theater. One cannot choose any individual actor for special mention. All performed skillfully, several superbly, in that peculiarly characteristic fashion now associated with Artef—a discerning realism deepened by a slightly exaggerated pantomime, resulting in a vivid, unforgettable performance. JOSEPH NORTH.

Current Theater

"Theatre Art: Right or Left?" Manhattan Opera House. October 19. Heywood Broun, Kyle Crichton, Joseph Freeman, Lee Simonson, George Sklar in what promises to be an absorbing discussion. Premieres of *Remember* by Clifford Odets and *Bivouac Alabama* by Paul Peters; and scenes from *The Barker* by Kenyon Nicholson. Sponsored by the Marine Committee Against War and Fascism. Tickets 30 cents to $1.65

Most of the Game. Cort Treatre. John Van Druten's new whipped cream concoction made out of the empty (married) life of an empty author who looks for happiness and finds it in a boyhood love. Double-divorce proceedings add the requisite cuteness. James Bell's acting and some bright lines save the evening from complete tedium.

Eastern Festival: New Theater League. Civic Repertory. On October 26, New Theater Magazine's second "Night" of the season; a number of outstanding eastern groups in the New Theater League in a program of plays.

Sweet Mystery of Life. Shubert Theatre. Hobart Cavanaugh and Gene Lockhart are two bright spots. in a collaboration by Maibaum, Wallach and Haight on the experience of a chain-store owner who gets insured for $5,000,000. Amusing comedy in the first act gives way to farce and confusion.

Squaring the Circle, by Valentine Katayev. Lyceum Theater. A play of Soviet self-criticism, to be reviewed next week.

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The Screen

Here Comes Hollywood

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER, the same company that is about to utilize the charms of Jean Harlow to put over a bit of anti-labor propaganda in the form of *Riff Raff,* is currently showing, throughout the country, a picture called *Here Comes the Band* which includes as subtle a message for militarism as has come out of the Hollywood factories.

The film did not achieve the distinction of a premiere at the Capitol Theater, the company's New York first-run outlet. It opened, instead, at neighborhod theaters as the second half of a double-feature program. All this despite the fact that it was the better part of two months in production; that Ted Lewis and his band were hired to appear in it; and that the cast boasts such names as Virginia Bruce, Ted Healy, Nat Pendleton, Henry Kolker and "Spanky" MacFarland.

It appears that Healy and Pendleton, buddies during the fight for "democracy," have become, in 1935, taxi drivers. One day their former commanding colonel enters Healy's hack and, when recognition follows, there is a happy reunion among these two and Pendleton. The Colonel invites the others, still in their hackman's uniforms, to partake of cocktails with him at the Ritz Bar.

Following a bit of elbow-lifting, the Colonel extends a most cordial invitation to the boys to attend an Armistice Reunion at his palatial home. Among those present, he promises, will be none other than Ted Lowry (Lewis) and his band, who (Healy and Pendleton included) made up the company band. The boys are enthusiastic, to put it mildly. Why, Lowry is the magician of melody, the monarch of music!

And then . . .

"Do you remember . . .?" The Colonel begins wistfully and the picture fades on to a group of weary, muddy, staggering soldiers, retreating without organization, desperately, under heavy bombardment. One khaki-clad boy becomes hysterical. His comrades support and try to calm him, the lad is fed up with slaughter.

Suddenly, in the distance, we hear the strains of martial music. Now it comes closer. It is Ted Lowry and he is at the head of a band of spick-and-span melody makers, in uniform.

The situation is desperate. But the Co' onel knows of Lowry's gift. "Play!" I orders. And do the boys play! You m not believe it, but the fighting music mirac lously transforms the faces of the hun targets until they are all aglow with patr happiness. Forgotten is the weariness; the hysteria. They smile; they brace with new determination, with fresh cou they continue their march—retreating course. To hell with shells burstin around us! When Lowry plays, we nothing!

Here the picture resumes its norm quence. Still wistful at this glorious m the Colonel says:

"Good old war!"

The boys echo him. . . . And then, afterthought, the Colonel adds:

"May it be the last!"

His listeners are so astonished at th mark that they look at each other as intimate that the old boy ought to ha head examined. If Healy and Pen were called upon to register understa they failed. Anyway, the remark is i iately followed by a dissolve, thus embarrassment on the part of all conc

A reel or two later, Healy and Pen

Hear reports on the sharecroppers' situation in Lowndes County, Alabama, where six strikers were murdered and many beaten in the cotton pickers' strike, at the
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are rounding up the members of that famous band so that a tenor protege of theirs may have the benefit of an audition before a prominent musician. As the two dash all over the city to hand the protege's original music to the ex-bandsmen for study, we learn that not one of the band is unemployed, not one suffering some reaction from the horrors of the battlefields. On the contrary, one is now a banker, whose million-dollar conference the boys interrupt; one is a fashionable dressmaker; another a successful dentist; a fourth a lawyer pleading his case before a jury. The war over; these gentlemen merely resumed their places in life and business, even if five million others never returned to their homes. What could be sweeter?

RICHARD HAMMER.

Sell Entertainment

F you think that *Red Salute* (United Artists) is a propaganda film you're ong, because the distributors deny it. In r press-book to theater owners they say:

> *Red Salute* is not intended to be a propaganda m in any sense of the word—it is built and med squarely at the door of entertainment—it built primarily to provide one and one-half ars of romantic, exciting, tempestuous romance.

course it isn't their fault that *"Red e* may start a cycle of similar type films ch will arouse both the man in the street the intellectual [!] to discussion of ern day modes of living." They con- e, "Tell your ticket buyers . . . that *Red te* is one of the most amusing romantic dies of the year . . . in other words you n the show business; sell entertainment; it up to the hilt and the other angles take care of themselves."

d Salute, an attack on the splendid stu- ' movement against war and fascism, is ntertaining as a Hearst editorial or a r speech. Barbara Stanwyck as Drue Allen ("Red"), an American army al's daughter, is shipped off to Mexico er father to prevent her from marrying edder-than-the-rose student "leader" of Liberty League of International Students. s organization, according to the film, is gned by foreign agitators to spread un- erican ideas among United States students. Red escapes from Mexico with the aid of a soldier who has no use for these dreamers and yellow Reds. He's a he-man who joined the army in order to fight. He's looking for a good war. The greater portion of the film (in the good old comedy-chase formula) is devoted to Red and her soldier boy (Uncle Sam) dodging the border patrol, in between a sandstorm, thunder and lightning, crooning, love-making and some long speeches (in the sez-you-sez-me manner) about radicalism, dreamers and Americanism and he-men. There is the comedy relief (imagine a comedy film with comedy relief) by a stooge (Cliff Edwards). In the meantime the immigration authorities find out that Leonard Arner (the "leader") is a paid foreign agent here on a student's permit. They can't oblige the general and deport this young man because his permit still has some months to go and besides they can't interfere with the American right of free speech! But just leave it to the army. The general gets hold of Uncle Sam and they concoct plans to "frame" Leonard Arner so that he can be deported for "inciting to riot." The climax of the film is the May Day meeting. The leader addresses the student-body as "dear comrades" and raises a clenched fist. In some Hollywood manner, Uncle Sam manages to get up on the platform and turn the meeting into a patriotic demonstration. This same soldier incites a row and the entire audience joins in. The police arrive in the nick of time and arrest Arner for starting the riot. The girl marries the enlisted man (who turns out to be the aristocratic son of a Texas lumberman), thus adjusting the class relationships for the American army.

The film is obvious, crude and insultingly stupid. It has already aroused picketing in protest and in many theaters its appearance has stirred the audience to unmistakable condemnation. *Red Salute* is only the beginning. It will be fought hard every inch of the way.

PETER ELLIS.

Current Films

Wings Over Ethiopia (Paramount): The distributors trying to cash in on the Italo-Ethiopian war with a travelogue of an airplane trip from Switzerland to Ethiopia made for the Swiss air line. There are some political maps in the beginning and some nice aerial photography, but generally the film is constructed on the style of most pseudo-anthropological films with their quota of naked female torsos, sex appeal and primitive "horrors." The banal "musical" score will not add to your entertainment or enlightenment.

Here Comes Cookie (Paramount): The plot or the film doesn't matter. If you like the insanities of Burns and Allen for an hour or so you'll like this.

Dr. Socrates (Warner Bros. Strand): Even Paul Muni can't lift this gangster melodrama from its mediocrity.

I Live My Life (M-G-M. Capitol): In former pictures Joan Crawford gave Robert Montgomery, Franchot Tone, Clark Gable the air. Now she lives her life with Brian Aherne and wears gowns by Adrian.

Shipmates Forever (Warner Bros.-Cosmopolitan): Mr. Hearst says Hooray for the Naval Academy and writes to his film reviewers: "Here is our chance (by singing songs of praise for the film) to make a lot of money for Mr. Hearst." P. E.

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Between Ourselves

JOHN REED'S poem "America, 1918," published in last week's NEW MASSES, will be read Friday night, October 18, at the memorial meeting for John Reed at the Civic Repertory Theatre, 103 West 14th Street, New York. The League of American Writers and the John Reed Club are sponsoring the meeting. Alfred Kreymborg will read the poem during his discussion of Reed's Poetry. Other speakers include Granville Hicks, Robert Morss Lovett and Carlo Tresca. The program begins at 8.30.

Mrs. Rebecca Cohen, of Valley Stream, L. I., is sponsoring a concert for the benefit of THE NEW MASSES at the Wellerson Music Studios, 171 West 71st Street, Suite 7—E. F., New York, on Saturday evening, October 26, at 8.30. The participating artists are Max and Ida Wellerson, pianists; Mila Wellerson, cellist; Anastasia Rabinoff, prima donna soprano; and Zara Listengart, accompanist. Tickets at $1 each may be obtained from Mrs. Cohen at 24 Oak Street, Valley Stream, L. I., or from THE NEW MASSES, 31 East 27th Street.

William Siegel, whose work appears frequently in THE NEW MASSES, will have a one-man exhibition at the A. C. A. Gallery, 52 West 8th Street, New York, beginning October 27.

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